#### INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

- The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
- 2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
- 3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper tieft hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
- 4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
- PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

**Xerox University Microfilms** 

300 North Zeeb Road Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

75-2380

GREEMAN, Elizabeth Dix, 1933-STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL MEN IN THE SECTIONAL CRISIS OF 1860.

Duke University, Ph.D., 1974 History, modern

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

## STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL MEN IN THE SECTIONAL

CRISIS OF 1860

рÀ

Elizabeth Dix Greeman

Department of History Duke University

Date: 4/23/74

Approved:

Nobert F. Durden, Supervisor

Harold T. Parker

Myland J. Budd

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History in the Graduate School of Duke University

#### ABSTRACT

(American History)

## STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL MEN IN THE SECTIONAL

CRISIS OF 1860

рÀ

Elizabeth Dix Greeman

Department of History Duke University

	,	
Date: _	4/23/74	<u> </u>
Approved		
	Robert F. Dunden	
Robert	F. Durden, Super	visor
/	wold T. Barker	
. N	Wall & brack of	کمسک
	Junis & Buc	la.

An abstract of a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History in the Graduate School of Duke University

#### ABSTRACT

# STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL MEN IN THE SECTIONAL CRISIS OF 1860

рА

#### Elizabeth Dix Greeman

In the sectional crisis of 1860 over the question of slavery in the territories Stephen A. Douglas occupied a middle position between two extremes. By 1860 this moderation was no longer acceptable to those in the North and South who had made slavery primarily a moral and emotional issue rather than a political one. A growing Northern faction gathered in the Republican party, which was an umbrella for all anti-slavery sentiment. Opposed to the Republicans was an ultra-Southern faction which was willing to do anything, even dissolve the Union, to preserve the "peculiar institution" and what the ultra-Southerners entitled State Rights. Other Southerners were less extreme in their ideas yet distrusted Douglas because he was unwilling to accept the Dred Scott decision fully and also unwilling to back legislation for congressional protection of slavery in the territories. Finally, the faction surrounding President James Buchanan, which was more personal than sectional, bore hostility to Douglas resulting not only from differences in

ideology but also from rivalry for ascendancy in the Democratic party.

Amid this factionalism Douglas and his vice-presidential running-mate, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia, sought to win the presidential election of 1860. To each of them the pre-eminent issue of the campaign was the preservation of the Union. Speaking to Southerners who threatened secession if Lincoln were elected, they pleaded for calm deliberation and for the placing of national unity before sectional striving. Douglas and Johnson pointed out the futility of destroying the Union over an abstraction. Speaking to Northerners they tried to show that the South was in deadly earnest about secession. Douglas campaigned in those sections where he had least hope of victory, New England and the South, showing that his aim was not merely the winning of an election, but primarily the saving of the Union and the peace.

This study does not attempt to add to the mountain of speculation as to how things might have been different in 1860, but rather tries to look at the events and issues through the eyes of contemporaries. It attempts to focus attention on the way in which contemporaries, especially Southerners, perceived reality and to find in that perception some clues to why they rejected Douglas and Johnson and chose instead, knowingly or unknowingly, Lincoln's election and Southern secession, two events that were fatally tied together.

Factionalism, sectionalism, and even fanaticism were not new to the American scene in 1860. What was new was the

inability of the majority of Americans to work any longer at finding peaceful solutions to national problems. For the first time those who placed state and sectional loyalty above national interests obtained the power and influence to challenge the severeignty of the national government. It was in this climate of opinion that Douglass and Johnson waged their campaign for the Union.

For several decades after 1860 Stephen A. Douglas was pictured by historians as a scheming politician motivated by ambition and demagoguery. George Fort Milton's work The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War was the first major attempt to rehabilitate the Little Giant and perhaps went too far in praise of him. Allan Nevins Ordeal of the Union reflects the older view and only speaks admiringly of Douglas after he took the campaign to the South to prevent disunion. Recently, and after this study was well along, Robert Johannsen's Stephen A. Douglas appeared as the first major biography of Douglas since Milton's. Johannsen's work is comprehensive and views Douglas as a practical politician with both strengths and weaknesses. The view of Douglas here has been greatly influenced by Johannsen's work. Besides the inclusion of Herschel Johnson in this study, the major difference between this work and Johannsen's is one of viewpoint. While Douglas is always at the center of Johannsen's work, this study attempts to focus more closely on the response of others, especially Southerners, to the Little Giant. It relies on evidence found in the letters, speeches and newspapers of the South to find an answer to the

question of why the South rejected Douglas after he had worked so hard to find solutions to the questions troubling the South's relation to the nation.

In his own time and by contemporaries Douglas has often been found too Northern for many Southerners, too Southern for many Northerners. Yet his voice was almost alone in its efforts to stop the course of the South to secession in the months before the threat became a reality. That he and Johnson pleaded in vain for the Union hardly lessens the significance of their efforts.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to thank all those who have helped bring this research to its final form. First of all thanks are due to Professor Robert F. Durden who has been the advisor of this work. Thanks are also due to the many other members of the faculty of the department of history at Duke University who have influenced my thinking, my research skills and my writing. A special thank you must go to Professor David Meerse of the State University of New York at Fredonia. He too is engaged in research involving Stephen A. Douglas and through many questions, answers and inquiries has greatly strengthened this study.

A word of thanks goes to the many librarians who have helped me find materials. The names of these are too numerous to list but the list is headed by the staffs of the Manuscript Room and the Reference Desk at Duke University Library.

A final thank you must go to my husband, William Louis Greeman, who has never failed to encourage me to complete what I had begun and who has patiently put up with me during all stages of the work.

E. D. G.

#### CONTENTS

ABSTRAC	T	111
ACKNOWI	EDGEMENTS	vii
INTRODU	CTION	2
ı.	STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS: THE PERSON AND THE POLITICIAN	9
II.	HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: THE PERSON AND THE POLITICIAN	44
III.	QUEST FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION1860	64
IV.	THE CHARLESTON CONVENTION: MICROCOSM OF SECTIONALISM	97
v.	THE INTERIM AND THE BALTIMORE CONVENTION: A REPEAT PERFORMANCE	123
VI.	THE DOUGLAS-JOHNSON CAMPAIGN: A MIDDLE COURSE BETWEEN EXTREMES	152
VII.	TWO PRONGED DOUGLAS-JOHNSON CAMPAIGN TO WIN THE PRESIDENCYTO SAVE THE UNION	196
VIII.	AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION	233
SELECTE	D BIBLIOGRAPHY	253



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS AND HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON:
EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL MEN IN THE SECTIONAL
CRISIS OF 1860

## INTRODUCTION

In the sectional crises of 1860 Stephen A. Douglas occupied a middle position between two extremes. He stood where he had a decade earlier on the ground that the slavery question must be settled in the territories rather than in Congress. By 1860 this stance was no longer acceptable to those in the North and South who had made slavery primarily a moral and emotional issue rather than a political one. A growing Northern faction gathered in the Republican party, which was an umbrella for all anti-slavery sentiment from fanatical abolitionists to those who only hoped to contain the expansion of slavery.

Opposed to the Republicans was an ultra-Southern faction personified in William B. Yancey of Alabama, who was willing to do anything, even dissolve the Union, to preserve the "peculiar institution" and what the ultra-Southerners entitled State Rights. Other Southerners were less extreme in their ideas yet distrusted Douglas because he was unwilling to accept the Dred Scott decision as fully as they and also unwilling to back legislation for congressional protection of slavery in the territories. Finally, the faction surrounding President James Buchanan, which was more personal than sectional, bore hostility

to Douglas resulting not only from differences in ideology but also from rivalry for ascendancy in the Democratic party. At the root of all this factionalism was the question of slavery in the territories both as a question of principle and as a pragmatic political issue to be settled by Congress.

Amid this factionalism Douglas and his vice-presidential running-mate, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia, sought to win the presidential election of 1860. To each of them the pre-eminent issue of the campaign was the preservation of the Union. Speaking to Southerners who threatened secession if Lincoln were elected, they pleaded for calm deliberation and for the placing of national unity before sectional striving. Douglas and Johnson pointed out the futility of destroying the Union over an abstraction. Speaking to Northerners they tried to show that the South was in deadly earnest about secession. Douglas campaigned in those sections where he had least hope of victory, New England and the South, showing that his aim was not merely the winning of an election, but primarily the saving of the Union and the peace.

The subsequent dissolution of the Union and the events leading to it in the previous decade have been studied by historians for over a century, yet final answers to the many questions surrounding the approach of the Civil War seem to elude definition. This study does not attempt to add to the mountain of speculation as to how things might have been different, but rather tries to look at the events and issues through the eyes of contemporaries. It attempts to focus

attention on the way in which contemporaries, especially Southerners, perceived reality and to find in that perception some clues to why Lincoln's election and Southern secession were two events that were fatally tied together.

Factionalism, sectionalism, and even fanaticism were not new to the American scene in 1860. What was new was the inability of the majority of Americans to work any longer at finding peaceful solutions to national problems. For the first time since the ratification of the Constitution those who placed state and sectional loyalty above national interests obtained the power and influence to challenge the sovereignty of the national government. The spirit of compromise which had made the Constitution possible and which had maintained the government for seven decades had been replaced by one of intransigence. It was in this climate of opinion that Douglas and Johnson waged their campaign for national sovereignty and for constitutional solutions to the problems of the country.

In the century since the 1860 campaign, opinions have remained divided over the sincerity and motivation of that fight for the Union which Douglas and Johnson waged. Nineteenth-century historians largely condemned Douglas' efforts as motivated purely by personal ambition and demagoguery. In the twentieth century, with access to more abundant documents and with greater detachment from the emotionalism of the Civil War, historians have looked at Douglas in a more favorable light and, while not applauding all of his actions, have attempted to find the causes of his failures in less than sinister ambition.

The first major biography to present this revisionist picture was George Fort Milton's The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A.

Douglas and the Needless War, which argued that Douglas' great strength lay in his being a realist. Written in the midst of the New Deal, this work viewed Douglas as a pragmatic politician whose plans, had they been followed, might have accomplished more for the nation than the moral absolutes and idealism of his Northern opponents.

Allan Nevins in his volumes The Ordeal of the Union and The Emergence of Lincoln largely rejected the revisionist interpretation of Douglas and presented him as an improviser who failed to calculate the long-range effects of his proposed solutions to national problems. Nevins found Douglas devoid of the ability to think abstractly about problems or to present carefully reasoned general ideas. Nevins did, however, admit that two "elementary articles of faith" guided Douglas actions: his belief in the growth of the country and his faith in popular democracy. Nevins never saw Douglas as a statesman until the late summer of 1860, when convinced that Lincoln would be elected and that the South would secede, Douglas went South to plead for the preservation of the Union. Without explaining how such a complete change could occur in a man, Nevins declares of that period: "In the late summer of 1860 he loomed up as incomparably the bravest, wisest, and most candid statesman in the land."

The most recent detailed scholarship on Douglas has been done by Robert W. Johannsen of the University of Illinois.

Beginning with the editing of Douglas' letters in 1961,

Johannsen has since published numerous articles on Douglas and
in 1973 completed a major biographical study, Stephen A. Douglas.

In Johannsen's view Douglas' "political actions were based on a
strong sense of realism and practicality. . . . His principles
were always tempered in their expression . . . by his determination never to seek more than he thought politically possible."

By no means, however, does Johannsen see Douglas as deserving
only of adulation. The source of Douglas' failure is identified
as lying in his miscalculation of the mood of the country and
in his inability to comprehend that compromise was no longer an
acceptable measure of settlement to either the North or the
South.

In light of the work which Johannsen has done, it might be asked in what way this study agrees or disagrees with Johannsen's work. The view of Douglas presented herein has been greatly influenced by the work which Johannsen has done. In Douglas' striving for election to the highest office of the land ambition certainly played a part—as it must have in that of virtually every man who has been elected to it. Even Lincoln, in comparison with whom Douglas has been made by some to look so unprincipled, admitted the role which ambition played in his seeking of the highest office in the land. But Douglas seems also to have been motivated by a sincere desire to lead the country to a peaceable solution to the tensions and divisions of the 1850's.

Aside from the inclusion of Herschel Johnson, the most important way in which this work differs from Johannsen's biographical treatment of the events in Douglas' life in 1860 is in focus. While Douglas is always at the center of Johannsen's work, this study attempts to focus more closely on the response of others, especially Southerners, to the "Little Giant." What explanations for his failure can be found in the letters, speeches, and newspapers of the South? Why was Douglas so mistaken in his estimate of his popularity among the mass of the Southern people, though he admitted the extent of the hatred which their leaders had for him?

Johnson has been little studied by other historians. The only full-scale biography, Percy Flippin's Herschel V. Johnson:

Georgia Unionist, was written almost exclusively from the papers in the Johnson manuscript collection at Duke University and consists more of a narration of events than of an interpretation of the man, the principles he held, and the events in which he participated. This study attempts to look at a single event in Johnson's long political career and see what motivated him to accept a nomination which was so patently unpopular among the people he represented. Again, the reactions of others to Johnson and his candidacy have been sought in an effort to see the man in a multi-dimensional aspect.

Douglas has been uncommonly maligned both by contemporaries and by historians. He has been labelled a politician rather than a statesman and has been said to have lacked

principles and moral uprightness because he refused to base his position on slavery on morality and idealism rather than on constitutionalism. He was too Southern for many Northerners, too Northern for many Southerners, yet his voice was almost alone in its efforts to stop the course of the South to secession in the months before the threat became a reality. hardly possible for a man to have been in the national spotlight for as long as Doublas was without having made both mistakes and enemies. Yet neither of these are conclusive proof that there was anything lacking in the sincerity of Douglas' devotion to the nation, his party, and the people he represented. the context of state politics the same might be said of Herschel Together this team of Northerner and Southerner went to the people of the United States in 1860 to plead for the sober second thought upon the election of Lincoln. pleaded in vain hardly lessens the significance of their efforts.

### CHAPTER I

## STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, THE PERSON AND THE POLITICIAN

The election of Abraham Lincoln in the Republican victory of 1860 and the Southern response to that victory climaxed a political warfare begun many years earlier over which section, North or South, would determine the fate of slavery and would ultimately control the national destiny of the United States. Throughout these years Stephen A. Douglas was the leader of those who tried to avert a final split through compromise and the rational settlement of sectional differences.

Twelve years before the coming of the Civil War Douglas addressed clear warning to the South and predicted the end to which agitation of the question of slavery would lead.

I have no sympathy for abolitionism on the one side, or that extreme course on the other which is akin to abolitionism. We are not willing to be trodden down, whilst you [Southerners] hazard nothing by your violence, which only builds up your adversary in the North. . . . He [the abolitionist] is to be upheld at the North, because he is the champion of abolition; and you are to be upheld at the South, because you are the champions who meet him; so that it comes to this that between those two ultra parties, we of the North who belong to neither, are thrust aside.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., App. 506, April 20, 1848.

Douglas' prophetic assessment in 1848 of the sectionally explosive slavery question occurred during his first term in the Senate after he had served in various state offices as well as for two terms in the House of Representatives. At the age of thirty-four he was among the youngest of the senators, yet within a short time had become a leader in that body. Douglas' leadership continued up to the time of his death in 1861 though his popularity rose and fell among various groups depending on how well the measures he supported suited their wishes.

By 1860 some Northerners accused him of pandering to the "Slavocracy," while some Southerners countered that he was an abolitionist. In a speech delivered at Cincinnati, Ohio, on September 17, 1859, Abraham Lincoln pointed out to the Kentuckians and other Southerners in his audience those things for which they should thank Judge Douglas because of his alleged efforts to perpetuate and spread slavery. Contradicting Lincoln's assessment of Douglas' loyalty to the South, a Southern newspaper the year before had denounced Douglas as an abolitionist, saying, "If we are to have a Republican President, let us have an out and out, 'dyed in the wool' one, that we may know where to meet him and prepare to fend off the blow where we know it will fall, rather than one who, while he [Douglas] holds out the hand of pretended friendship, stabs us in the heart with a dagger which he has concealed beneath the cloak of hypocrisy."2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Speech of Lincoln at Cincinnati, Ohio, September 17, 1859, reprinted in The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, ed.

Between these two extreme views Douglas saw himself and his political mission as one of steering a course which was constitutional rather than moral in its approach to political questions; one which would preserve the Union with its imperfections rather than destroy it in a vain quest for perfection. He vigorously denied the extreme charges of both sides. support of his denial of the charge that he was really a Republican at heart was his consistent refusal to join that party, although by the end of the decade many northern Democrats had done so. He would almost certainly have received a warm welcome from the party especially in the Northwest. The charge that he pandered to Southern sympathies in order to satisfy his presidential ambitions was also denied by his actions, especially when Douglas refused to acquiesce in the Southern demand for congressional protection of slavery in the territories and thereby lost the support of many Southerners.

Though many contemporaries as well as many historians have accused Douglas of being unprincipled and inconsistent, an examination of both his words and actions during the 1850's and finally in the presidential campaign of 1860 gives the lie to such charges and show him to be consistent in principles and action regardless of the political consequences.

Douglas first came to national attention in 1850 during the struggle to solve the differences between North and South

by Roy P. Baster, III (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953), 425-462; Columbus, Georgia, <u>Daily Sun</u> as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, <u>Chronicle and Sentinel</u>, October 6, 1858.

through compremise. The question of slavery in the territories increased in importance after the acquisition of vast new lands following the Mexican War, and a simultaneous growth of the abolitionist movement from a few crusaders to a politically active and significant number of northerners. Because the questions agitating the nation from the close of the Mexican War until 1850 were settled amicably, the gravity of the threat to the Union has sometimes been forgotten. Secession was, nevertheless, a very real threat, one made openly by many Southern political leaders and journalists; angry public meetings were held and ultimatums issued. Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun waged their last great senatorial battle in the effort to settle peacefully the questions concerning the territories and the regulation of slavery, questions which were related though not identical.

In its final form the "Compromise of 1850" was in reality a set of five compromises passed by the Senate and the House as separate measures. The initial efforts to settle all these questions in one bill as proposed by Clay were unsuccessful, and only when the issues were separately voted on was there sufficient support from various elements and interest groups to pass them all. During the debates on their passage as separate bills Douglas wrote, "Thus will all the Bills pass the Senate and I believe the House also. When they are all passed you see they will be collectively Mr. Clays compromise, and separately the Bills Reported by the committee on Territories

[of which Douglas was chairman] four months ago."3

The Compromise in its final form contained something for each section. Briefly, the provisions were: (1) that California be admitted as a free state; (2) that the slave twade, but not slavery, be abolished in the District of Columbia; (3) that a more effective fugitive slave law be passed; (4) that the Texas boundary dispute be settled in favor of New Mexico but that the federal government would assume the public debt of Texas acquired before 1845; and (5) that the legislatures of the territories of Utah and New Mexico have power extending to "all rightful subjects of legislation."

The clause was purposely silent on the slavery question but "it meant and was intended to mean that the territorial legislature might legislate on the subject of slavery either to prohibit it, or to establish it, or to regulate it."

The first and fifth measures embodied the principle of "popular sovereignty" with which Douglas' name became almost synonymous during the ensuing decade. Though he did not originate the idea, Douglas adopted the doctrine that the question of slavery in the territories could be settled only by the people of the territory and not by congressional intervention. Even when this had first been formally enunciated as party policy by

Douglas to Charles H. Lanphier and George Walker, August 3, 1850, in <u>The Letters of Stephen A. Douglas</u>, ed. by Robert Johannsen (Urbana, Ill., 1961), 192. Hereafter cited as <u>Letters</u>. All spelling, capitalization and punctuation in this and all later quotations are as in the original.

Robert R. Russel, "What Was the Compromise of 1850?," The Journal of Southern History, XXII (August, 1956), 296.

Lewis Cass in his famous "Nicholson Letter" during his presidential campaign of 1848, some Southerners had objected. Most, however, accepted the principle as the constitutional way of settling the question of the extension of slavery. This acceptance was given public notice by Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi when, in a Senate speech supporting the Compromise he expressed approval of Douglas' role when he said, "If any man has a right to be proud of the success of these measures, it is the Senator from Illinois."5 It was Douglas' unswerving adherence to this principle which made him increasingly unpalatable to extremists both South and North during the 1850's. Gradually leaders of both sections refused to give any ground to the other: Southerners wanted unlimited expansion of slavery in the territories; Northerners wanted absolute guarantees against such expansion. Compromise on this question became less and less acceptable to either side.

Douglas' adoption of popular sovereignty as the basic principle guiding the formation and governance of territories began about the time of his election to the Senate. During his terms as a representative he had expressed satisfaction with the then current belief that the territories were subject to the dictates of Congress and only merited autonomy in the matter of drawing up their state constitutions. In a speech made in the House in 1845, Douglas indicated his belief that territories "are subject to the jurisdiction and control of Congress during

<sup>5</sup>Congressional Globe, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 1830, September 16, 1850.

their infancy, their minority." After studying Cass' statement of popular sovereignty, however, Douglas changed his position and became the foremost champion of the principle of popular sovereignty for the next twelve years. This is not to imply that the application of the principle did not grow, but only that through all Douglas' work on territorial questions there ran a basic consistency. Douglas was primarily a practical politician seeking solutions to national problems, solutions which were within the limitations set by the Constitution as he understood it. "Popular sovereignty was an expedient solution to a disruptive question, but it was a solution in which expediency merged with principae." During the 1850's this principle was applied by Douglas whether it promised to further his personal ambitions or not, and increasingly, it did not.

After the Compromise of 1850 was accepted by both the North and the South and the principle of popular sovereignty was adopted as a workable solution to the territorial questions before the nation, Douglas enjoyed a great wave of popularity both North and South. On the crest of this wave there was a movement undertaken to obtain for him the Democratic presidential nomination in 1852. At that time Douglas was only thirty-eight years old and had served less than ten years in national office. His leadership of the younger members of the

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 28th Cong., 2d Sess., 284, February 13, 1845. This speech is only paraphrased in the Globe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Robert Johannsen, "Stephen A. Douglas, Popular Sovereignty and the Territories," <u>The Historian</u>, XXII (August, 1960), 394.

Democratic party who styled themselves "Young America" had, however, given him a prominence beyond his years.

The Democracy strongly wanted to recover from the defeat of Cass by Zachary Taylor in the presidential election of 1848, but the party was still much divided. Most of the potential candidates were far older than Douglas, but by that token also had more enemies and were more bitterly opposed by factions within the party. In 1851 Douglas' prospects looked bright. The great disadvantage he had was that, outside of Illinois, he had no party organization working for him. On the other hand he had friends in every state and many were eager for his nomination. Douglas' most formidable opposition came from Cass of Michigan, the party's defeated candidate in the previous election, and from James Buchanan of Pennsylvania who had served a long apprenticeship in the party and wanted the final reward of a nemination for the presidency. Each presidential hopeful had a coterie of friends working toward his election but also a group of inflexible enemies working against it. Harmony was not the watchword of the Democracy in the 1850's.8

At the close of 1851 Douglas was hopeful of success when he wrote to his close friend, Charles Lamphier: "In regard to the Presidency I will say a few words. Things look

The best account of the pre-convention machinations within the Democratic party and of the convention is found in Roy F. Nichols, The Democratic Machine. 1850-1854 (Studies in History. Economics and Public Law, Columbia University, CXI) (New York, 1923), Chapters 1-9.

well & the prospect is brightening every day. All that is necessary now to ensure success is that the north West should unite & speak out." The greatest obstacle blocking party unity behind Douglas was Lewis Cass, who not only had much support in the Northwest, but also was the author of the popular sovereignty doctrine which Douglas had adopted as his political philosophy and which even then was unacceptable to some Southerners. There was not much difference between them in their political positions. The real differences were in age and in personality; Cass was nearly seventy, obese, and quite lethargic; Douglas, not much more than half of Cass' age, was in contrast full of dynamic energy waiting to be spent for his party and country.

chance for the nemination was the imprudent efforts of a friend, George N. Sanders. Early in 1851 Sanders gained control of a prominent magazine, The Democratic Review and used its pages to attack other presidential aspirants whom he labeled "old fogy drones" while purporting to further the cause of Douglas, though without using his name except "as an example, and merely as an example. . . "10 Everyone knew, however, that Douglas and Sanders were friends and Douglas' repudiation of the attacks could not negate the effect of the articles on friends of other hopefuls. In two letters Douglas begged Sanders to desist, but to no avail. When Douglas objected to the

<sup>9</sup>Douglas to Lanphier, December 30, 1851, Letters, 235.

<sup>10</sup> George Sanders, "Congress, the Presidency, and the Review," The United States Democratic Review (March, 1852), 203, 217.

"Politicians are all cowards and you are at the head of the list." Added to the inherent disadvantage of youth, the contempt of some for his humble origins and somewhat rough manners, Sanders' efforts on Douglas' behalf helped assure his defeat at the national convention. Eight years later anti-Douglas forces centered on some of the same issues. Enemies made in 1852 had long memories and continued unwilling to find Douglas acceptable as party leader.

Douglas, however, was not one to sulk. On hearing of the nomination of a compromise candidate, Douglas sent a telegram to the convention: "I congratulate the Democratic party on the fortunate result of the nomination and Illinois will give Franklin Pierce a larger majority than any other State in the Union." And Douglas went out to campaign vigorously for the party's success which was accomplished the following November.

After the excitement of the campaign had passed, solutions for the problems of the country still needed to be found. One of the most important problems before the Congress

ll Sanders to Douglas, February 11, 1852, Stephen A. Douglas Papers, University of Chicago Library. Hereafter cited as Douglas MSS; Douglas to Sanders, February 10, April 15, 1852, Letters, 239, 246.

Douglas to William A. Richardson, June 5,.1852, Letters, 252. Pierce was not really a dark horse since his friends had carefully planned the strategy which prevented any of the three major candidates from receiving the necessary votes and after thirty-five ballots his name was entered by Virginia, and a majority was reached on the forty-ninth. See Nichols, Democratic Machine, Chapters 8-9.

during the 1850's was the organization of the territories west of the Mississippi River. Douglas was chairman of the committee on territories, and in this position he was responsible for reporting bills for setting up territorial governments in those areas not yet organized. In 1844 during his first term in the House of Representatives Douglas had presented a bill for the organization of the territory known as Nebraska, but the measure was never acted upon. In 1853 Douglas wrote to a group in Missouri who were interested in the organization of that territory, "From that day [in 1844] I have never ceased my efforts on any occasion, when there was the least hope of success, for the organization of the Territory, and have scarcely allowed a Congress to pass without bringing forward the Bill in one House or the other." Indicating his driving determination to facilitate the development of the West, Douglas continued, "The tide of emigration and civilization must be permitted to roll onward until it rushes through the passes of the mountains, and spreads over the plains and mingles with the waters of the Pacific."13

Though Douglas' concern with the Western development of the country seemed to be primary, he was not unaware of the part the slavery question would play in any bill for the organization of a new territory. In the same letter he wrote, "It is to be hoped that the necessity and importance of the measure are manifest to the whole country, and that so far as the

<sup>13</sup>Douglas to J. H. Crane and others, December 17, 1853, Letters, 269, 270.

slavery question is concerned, all will be willing to sanction and affirm the principle established by the Compromise measures of 1850."14

Once again, in 1854, Douglas introduced a bill for the organization of the Nebraska Territory. As finally passed this act provided for the territory to be divided into two parts with the names Kansas and Nebraska. It further specified that the provision of the Missouri Compromise which prohibited the introduction of slavery north of 36' 30° in the Louisiana Territory Purchase was to be abrogated and that the question of slavery was to be decided by the people of the territory and not by Congress. This provision was modeled on that which controlled the organization of the New Mexico and Utah territories under the Compromise of 1850, and Douglas propounded it as a further application of the principle of popular sovereignty upon which he said all of the states had organized their state governments. The bill was completely satisfactory to neither North nor South, but again embodied compromise. Speaking of it three years later Senator Robert Hunter of Virginia said, "This although not all that we thought the South entitled to, was a great advance upon the old order of things, so far as she was concerned, because it removed an unjust and odious discrimination against her domestic institutions from the statute book. A moral triumph which was of vast importance to the South and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup><u>Tbid</u>., 271.

to the institution of slavery itself."15

It is difficult to understand the furor which developed upon the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, or to understand why Douglas did not anticipate the furor and avoid it. Detailed studies, on the other hand, give conflicting accounts of the "truth" of the complex motivations and intrigues which preceded the adoption of the measure. One fact emerges as certain: Douglas was far from being solely responsible for the bill in its final form. Yet, when it failed to be the panacea for sectional strife which many sought, the blame was heaped on Douglas. He himself "had lost an essential portion of his northern support without improving his position in the South." 16

The debates on the Kansas-Nebraska Act served to change the issue from "the fitness or unfitness of Kansas for Slavery," to "a test of sectional strength, a contest of conflicting principles." This change had been signaled in a speech of Senator William H. Seward when he declared, "We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas, and God give the victory to the side which is stronger in numbers as it is in

<sup>15</sup> Hunter to Shelton F. Leake, October 16, 1857, in The Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, ed. by Charles H. Ambler (Washington, 1918), 238. Hereafter cited as <u>Hunter</u> Correspondence.

The bibliography on the Kansas-Nebraska Act is long and conflicting. The best summary of the issues and their importance seems to be Roy F. Nichols, "The Kansas-Nebraska Act: A Century of Historiography," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIII (September, 1956), 187-212. Quote from 212.

<sup>17</sup> Avery Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861 (Baton Rouge, La., 1953), 209-210.

right."18 Thus the stage was set for the "bleeding Kansas" episodes which followed and for the continually ascending spiral of anxiety and fear which characterized so much of the political story of the remainder of the decade.

By the time the Kansas-Nebraska Act finally became law, it had become a challenge for extremists both North and South to prove their section's strength. Newspapers featured any story which detailed strife and violence in the newly organized territory; settlers in Kansas set up rival governments; abolitionists and Southern Ultras vied with each other to turn this warfare to profit for their side. Professor Avery Craven has "This was not a situation in which facts and truth concluded: mattered. Neither would have served the purpose. It was one in which the possibilities for inference, interpretation, and distortion counted most heavily. Stephen Douglas and the Kansas-Nebraska Bill offered exactly those possibilities. They made it easy for perfectly honest men to ignore realities and to believe the things they most feared."19

Douglas found himself caught between the two sides.

Northern free-soilers condemned him for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line and the consequent possibility of legalizing slavery in Kansas; Southerners condemned him for promising them new slave territory when events proved that slavery was not likely to thrive in Kansas, nor to be made legal

<sup>18</sup> Congressional Globe, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess., App. 769, May 25, 1854.

<sup>19</sup> Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 185.

there. Each side accused him of pandering to the other. The many other persons who had had a hand in the final form of the act were forgotten; factors other than slavery were no longer considered; Douglas and the moderation embodied in the bill became the scapegoat for both extremes.

With the Kansas troubles still filling the pages of the press, the Democratic party assembled in convention to nominate its candidate for the presidential election of 1856. It was a time of crisis not only between parties, but within the Democracy itself. The three men whose names were most frequently mentioned for the nomination were President Pierce, Stephen Douglas, and James Buchanan. The first had been a weak leader, had alienated many by both his foreign and domestic policies, and was held partly responsible for the Kansas troubles as well as for the lack of party unity. Douglas was likewise connected with the Kansas situation and had made himself unacceptable to some because of the power he had acquired within the party. Buchanan, Douglas' rival in the 1852 convention, and beaten there by Pierce, had been out of the country serving as minister to England and so was free from any record, good or bad, during the preceding four years.

Divisions were not confined to the Democratic party in 1856. The disintegration of the Whig party had been completed and a new party, sometimes known as the American party, more frequently known as the Know-Nothing party, whose main standards were nativism and anti-Catholicism, had appeared. Northern Whigs and dissatisfied Democrats, as well as the remnants of the Free

Soil party, had formed another new party in 1854 and called themselves Republicans. The question before each of the conventions
was whether they would take a stand on the questions which were
dividing the country, especially that of the status of slavery
in the territories, or whether they would soft-pedal issues and
put forth a candidate who might win and thus give their party
political control for the next four years.

When the Democratic convention opened in Cincinnati the delegates voted to adopt the platform before nominating a candidate. On the third day the platform committee read the platform which it had adopted unanimously; with very little opposition it was adopted by the whole convention. Its most important resolution stated: "That we recognize the right of the people of all the territories, including Kansas and Nebraska, acting through the legally and fairly expressed will of a majority of actual residents, . . . to form a Constitution, with or without domestic slavery, and be admitted into the Union upon terms of perfect equality with the other states."

While the adoption of the platform seemed to indicate unity in the ranks of the Democracy, this was hardly the case. The principle of popular sovereignty adopted in this most important resolution was ambiguous and susceptible of two interpretations: one was that the people of a territory could only decide the slavery question at the time of drafting a state

<sup>20</sup> Official Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention Held in Cincinnati. June 2-6. 1856 (Cincinnati, 1856), 26. Hereafter cited as Proceedings, 1856.

and must permit slavery's existence during the territorial period; or, that the people of a territory made a <u>final</u> decision about slavery at the time of drafting a constitution, but that by legislative acts or legislative inactivity <u>during</u> the territorial period could make the final decision merely <u>proforma</u>. This ambiguity and the ensuing arguments over which interpretation was correct were to further divide the party and provide the issue on which by 1860 every Democrat would have to take a stand.

When the convention moved to the nominating of a presidential candidate the contest was between Douglas and Buchanan, though President Pierce had a certain number of supporters. Douglas was the chief exponent of the principle of popular sovereignty which had been a principle of the Democratic party since 1848, while Buchanan was "the personification of evasion, the embodiment of an inducement to dodge." Pierce's strength was mainly from New England and the deep South and though there was no hope of obtaining a majority for him, the way in which his delegates would move when they deserted him was a pivotal question.

Notes of Murat Halstead from the Political Conventions of 1856, ed. by William Hesseltine and Rex Fisher (Madison, Wis., 1961), 17. Halstead was a journalist for the Cincinnati Commercial who had strong Republican leanings but his accounts, though anti-Democratic, are quite accurate and always readable. He covered political conventions down to the end of the century and left voluminous comments.

When after fourteen ballots the hopelessness of Pierce's cause became apparent, these delegates offered to support Douglas, expecting that Douglas' name would never be withdrawn in favor of Buchanan. In their eyes Buchanan was a cautious compromiser; they wanted a more aggressive ticket with which to wage the campaign against the Republicans. An eyewitness to the convention wrote later, "Mr. Buchanan's opposition to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise left him without support from the ultra Southern leaders."

The next day, however, when Buchanan's strength increased William Richardson, Douglas' floor manager, withdrew his name. In justification of this action Richardson read a telegram he had received from Douglas: "If the withdrawal of my name will contribute to the harmony of our Party or the success of the cause I hope you will not hesitate to take the step." Illinois then cast its vote for Buchanan and set the stage for giving him the two-thirds vote necessary for namination. The Pierce men from New England charged the Douglas men with bad faith; the radical Southerners were even more disappointed since they had not only lost Pierce and the hopes of having John Quitman of Mississippi as vice-presidential nominee, but they had also been forced to accept the Douglas platform. They had little to

New York, 1948), 31-32.

<sup>23</sup>s. M. Barlow to George Ticknor Curtis (n.d.), as quoted in Curtis, The Life of James Buchanan (New York, 1883), 172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Douglas to Richardson, June 3, 1856, <u>Letters</u>, 361.

show to their constituents which would recommend the Democratic ticket over that of their Whig-American opponents.<sup>25</sup> The bitterness felt by the Southern opponents of Buchanan was expressed in a letter of a Virginia delegate written shortly after the convention to Senator Robert Hunter: "You have heard and know how bitterly Bright and Douglas disappointed our expectations and how false and hollow were their professions. That they were fair as long as it was their interest and false as soon as that bond was broken."<sup>26</sup>

While the convention had accepted the doctrine of popular sovereignty in its platform, it had rejected Douglas who was the personification of that doctrine, in favor of Buchanan who had never whole-heartedly endorsed the principle and had even expressed a preference for the extension of the Missouri Compromise line. This contradiction enacted by the Democratic party signified its unwillingness to take a clear-cut stand on the slavery question. The convention then, instead of uniting the party, had only provided for the deepening of divisions and set the stage for the final rift four years later.

Immediately after the convention an Indiana delegate wrote to Douglas explaining why his delegation in the Cincinnati

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Nichols, <u>Disruption of American Democracy</u>, Chapter 1. For an eye-witness account which lacks objectivity but has incisive comments see Halstead, <u>Trimmers</u>, <u>Trucklers</u> and <u>Temporizers</u>, 16-65.

Lewis E. Harvie to Robert Hunter, June 16, 1856 in Hunter Correspondence, 197. Jesse Bright was a senator from Indiana. Apparently this writer did not know that Bright went to Cincinnati for the express purpose of furthering Buchanan's candidacy. He was opposed to Douglas throughout the decade.

convention had voted consistently for Buchanan:

To the Pennsylvania Delegates & all others with whom I conversed, I said my heart was with Douglas but my head was with Buchanan, or in other words I preferred you for President but him for a candidate, and I know that this feeling was fully shared & entertained by a large majority of our Delegates. . . . The age and experience of Mr. Buchanan tended not a lattle to produce this result, and it was strengthened by a large infusion of National Whigs who begged that we should give them a man of the olden time. 27

Douglas replied in the spirit of devotion to the party and its decisions: "I have no grievances growing out of the Cincinnati convention and nothing to regret so far as I am personal[ly] concerned. Our duty now demands our undivided efforts to ensure the triumphant election of the Tickett [sic] chosen by the convention."

Douglas' spirit of party support and unity was not reciprocated by Buchanan after his election assured Democratic ascendancy for four more years. From the beginning of his administration, President Buchanan gave Douglas to understand that he was not to be a favorite. Friends of Douglas were passed over in the distribution of patronage and in the appointment of cabinet officers; the Senator himself was excluded from administrative plans. Even before the inauguration he wrote to a supporter concerning a meeting he had had with Buchanan, "At present, I am an out sider. My advice is not coveted nor will my wishes probably be regarded." Indicating a presentiment that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>John Pettit to Douglas, June 10, 1856, Douglas MSS.

<sup>28</sup> Douglas to John Pettit, June 20, 1856, Letters, 363.

he would not only be excluded but might become the target of attack by the administration, he continued, "If . . . the power of the administration is to be used either for plunder or ambition I shall return every blow they may give."29

Douglas was not kept waiting long for the "blow." A few days after Buchanan's inauguration, the Supreme Court gave its historic Dred Scott decision. The majority opinion held that a Negro was not entitled to the rights of federal citizenship and that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional because Congress did not have the power to prohibit slavery in the territories. The two dissenting justices argued that indeed Negroes had been citizens in some states even before the Constitution was adopted and that Congress had the authority to make all necessary laws respecting the \*erritories belonging to the United States.

Chief Justice Taney in his opinion touched directly upon the question of popular sovereignty when, after denying that Congress had powers to prohibit slavery in the territories, he concluded that it then "could not authorize a Territorial

<sup>29</sup> Douglas to Samuel Treat, February 5, 1857, <u>Ibid.</u>, 372. Buchanan's animosity toward Douglas dated at least in part from the Democratic convention of 1852 when "Douglas' putting in for the nomination defeated Buchanan and caused Pierce an outsider to be taken up." Alexander H. Stephens to Thomas W. Thomas, June 16, 1856 in <u>Correspondence of Robert Toombs</u>, <u>Alexander H. Stephens and Howell Cobb</u>, ed. by U. B. Phillips (Washington, D.C., 1913), 370. Hereafter cited as <u>Toombs</u>, <u>Stephens</u>, <u>Cobb Correspondence</u>. Other reasons for Buchanan's hostility to Douglas may be found in the latter's popular appeal which Buchanan lacked, and in the hatred for Douglas among the men most closely associated with Buchanan, for example, Senators Jesse Bright of Indiana, John Slidell of Louisiana, and James Bayard of Delaware, as well as Howell Cobb of Georgia, Buchanan's Secretary of the Treasury.

Government to exercise them. It could confer no power on any local Government, established by its authority, to violate the provisions of the Constitution."30

Republican reaction to the decision was immediate and negative. Douglas, on the other hand, bided his time and found a way to accommodate popular sovereignty and avoid contradicting the decision of the court. His first public response to the decision was in a speech at Springfield, Illinois, on June 12, 1857. He not only refuted Republican attacks on the decision, but also explained how popular sovereignty could still be, in practice if not in theory, a viable system in spite of the decision:

While the right [to own slaves] continues in full force under the guarantees of the constitution, and cannot be divested or alienated by an act of Congress, it necessarily remains a barren and a worthless right, unkess sustained, protected and enforced, by appropriate police regulation and local legislation, prescribing adequate remedies for its violation. These regulations and remedies must necessarily depend entirely upon the will and wishes of the people of the territory, as they can only be prescribed by the local legislatures. Hence the great principle of popular sovereignty and self-government is sustained and firmly established. 31

This speech contained the same ideas which during the next year were given so much publicity as the "Freeport Doctrine" when Douglas replied to Lincoln's query concerning slavery in the territories.

Junited States Reports, 19 Howard, 399-454, as quoted in Robert Johannsen, Stephen A. Douglas (New York, 1973), 549.

<sup>31</sup> Speech at Springfield, Illinois, June 12, 1857. Printed at Chicago, 1857, 15pp., 6.

Chose on the heels of the debate over the Dred Scott decision, Douglas was faced with a still greater test of his principles from within the Democracy over the question of the admission of Kansas as a state under what became known as the Lecompton constitution. The three years following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill had been marked by sporadic violence; the administration was eager to get the territory admitted to statehood so that its problems might be removed from the national political arena. 32

If the Lecompton constitution had been adopted at a convention considered truly representative by a majority of Kansans, it is less likely that great opposition to it would have been aroused, but such was not the case. Numerous irregularities had surrounded the meeting at which the constitution was framed, and the competency of the framers was questionable. Most of the delegates did not want the Lecompton constitution submitted to the voters for approval, knowing that it would be defeated because it provided for the continuation of slavery in Kansas. A compromise of dubious merit was devised.

haps no worse than in any other frontier areas. It was, however, possible for the press to make it seem that the troubles in Kansas stemmed solely from the slavery issue. See, Bernard A. Weisberger, "The Newspaper Reporter and the Kansas Imbroglio," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVI (March, 1950), 652-656. Paul Gates, Fifty Millien Acres: Conflicts over Kansas Land Policy. 1854-1890 (Ithaca, 1954 [Atheling Press ed., 1966]), Chapter II, especially pp. 56-60 argues that Kansas "bled" more because of conflict over land claims for which, due to certain blunders in the Kansas-Nebraska Act, no legal title could be established.

The constitution was submitted to the voters in two versions: in the first, slavery and the slave trade would continue to exist as before; in the second, slavery would be forbidden according to the letter of the law but those slaves who were already in the state would remain as slaves. This latter provision would, in effect, make Kansas a slave state, at least for a time, while it was becoming a free state. The convention arranged that the constitution would be ratified by the voters with one provision or the other, but that it could not be completely rejected. Because of this last stipulation many free soilers in the territory refused to vote at all. Those who did vote in December, 1857, overwhelmingly approved the provision retaining slavery. In this form the Lecompton constitution was submitted to Congress for its approval. 35

In the Senate Douglas led the opposition to the Kansas constitution and in a letter to a Philadelphia editor explained his course:

The Lecompton Constitution does not, and never did, possess any vitality or authority, for two reasons: first, the Convention, not being vested with sovereign power, could not put it in operation; and second, that the same legislative authority which called the Convention into existence, passed a law, before the constitution was to

James Buchanan, Message to Congress "On the Constitution of Kansas," in The Works of James Buchanan, ed. by John Bassett Moore (Philadelphia, 1910), X, 179-192. This vote was over 6000 for the constitution with slavery, with only 569 for the constitution without slavery. The extent to which this failed to represent true majority sentiment in Kansas was shown two weeks later when in an election sponsored by the free-state legislature the same constitution was rejected by over 10,000 votes while only 162 votes favored it. Robert A. Johannsen, Stephen A. Douglas, 595.

have taken effect by its own terms, for its submission to the people, and provided that if a majority of the votes should be cast against it at that election, it was to be null and void, not only as a constitution, but even as a memorial to Congress. . . The Lecompton constitution, . . . should be repudiated by every Democrat who cherishes the time-honored principle of his party, and is determined, in good faith, to carry out the doctrine of self-government and popular sovereignty as guarantied [sic] in the Kansas-Nebraska act, and affirmed by the Cincinnati platform. 34

It is clear from this statement that Douglas' opposition was based on the illegality connected with the popular vote to which the constitution had been submitted in Kansas, and not on opposition to Kansas entering the Union as a slave state.

Before the Lecompton constitution was presented to the Senate, Buchanan summoned Douglas to let him know that the President expected him to support the measure and that he was making it a test of party loyalty. In Douglas' account of the interview he reported that he told the President, "I will denounce it the moment your message is read." Douglas was reported on another occasion to have exclaimed, "By G-d, Sir, I made Mr. James Buchanan! and by G-d, sir, I will unmake him!"35

In the months that followed Douglas confided to friends that he realized the consequences of his opposition: "It has become apparent that the administration is more anxious for my distruction [sic] than they are for the harmony & unity of

<sup>34</sup> Douglas to John W. Forney, et al., February 6, 1858, Letters, 409-410.

<sup>35</sup> Charles H. Ray to Lyman Trumball, November 24, 1857, Trumball Papers, Library of Congress, as quoted in Johannsen, Douglas, 585.

removing all my friends from office. . . . I am determined to stand firmly by my position and vindicate my principles and let the consequences take care of themselves. . . . The contest is a painful one to me, but I have no alternative, but to accept the issue and stand by what I deem to be my duty. "36 At times, however, he admitted to a realization of the long term consequences of his action against the administration." I will take no step backwards and abate not one iota of the position I have taken, let the consequences be what they may to me personally. "37

A letter written by an observer in the midst of the debate showed this more sensitive side of the "Little Giant": "Douglas does not disguise his conviction that he can never be forgiven by the South if he were ever so much disposed to ask forgiveness, and I thought I could perceive by the way in which he talked abundant evidence of an old hostility rankling in his bosom of which this outbreak about the Lecompton Constitution was as but the flash of the priming to the discharge." 38

Southern leaders almost universally condemned Douglas for his opposition to the Lecompton document. Not only those like John Slidell and Jefferson Davis who had traditionally been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Douglas to Samuel Treat, February 28, 1858, <u>Letters</u>, 418.

<sup>37</sup> Douglas to John A. McClernand, February 21, 1858, Ibid., 417.

<sup>38</sup> John Bigelow to William Cullen Bryant, December 28, 1857, as quoted in Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln (New York, 1950), I, 263. Bigelow was chief assistant editor of the New York Evening Post and an active Republican.

his rivals, but also those like Alexander H. Stephens and Robert Toombs of Georgia who had previously been admirers of the "Little Giant," joined in the condemnation. They accused him of hostility to the South and of being false in his friend-ship for that section. They charged that he had never really been a friend to the South but had rather used the South in the past only to further his own personal ambition; they were suspicious that he would not accept popular sovereignty unless the decision was for a free state. 39

Again, Douglas denied that he favored either section.

In a speech in the Senate he defended his rejection of the Lecompton constitution:

I do not care what provision the people of Kansas insert in their Constitution on each, all, or any of these subjects. Whatever they want to put there they may have; but I vote against it because this constitution does not meet their will--because they are opposed to it. If they are opposed to it only because they do not like the elective franchise, you have no right to force it on them . . . . So with the slavery question. I stand on the principle that the people of Kansas have a right to make their own constitution, and have it embody their own will; and I will stand by that right, whether the result be to make Kansas a slave State or a free State, and any other motive attributed to me is unjust, and proven to be unjust by the fact that I denounced this as a fraud at a time when it was universally conceded here that the pro-slavery clause was to be stricken out. 40

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Robert Toombs, Speech in Senate, <u>Congressional Globe</u>, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., March 22, 1858, App. 201-202; Rudolph Von Abele, <u>Alexander Stephens</u> (New York, 1946), 164. Though members of the Whig party until 1855, Toombs and Stephens had supported both the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

<sup>40</sup> Congressional Globe, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., 571, March 22, 1857.

Many, however, were not interested in listening to his reasons for rejecting the Lecompton constitution. They heard only that he refused to abide by administration policy and to vote with Southern Democrats to get the measure passed.

Referring to the pressure brought on him by the administration to support the measure, Douglas continued in the same speech: "I do not recognize the right of the President or his cabinet, no matter what my respect may be for them, to tell me my duty in the Senate Chamber. . . Am I to be told that I must obey the executive and betray my State, or else be branded as a traitor to the party, and hunted down by all the newspapers that share the patronage of the Government? and every man who holds a petty office in any part of my State to have the question put to him, 'Are you Douglas's enemy? If not your head comes off'?"

Not everyone, however, turned against Douglas. As in the case of the Compromise of 1850, opinion was divided. Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia sent Douglas his "heartfelt approbation" and said openly that if the Lecompton constitution were approved, "Democracy is dead." Other Southerners wrote Douglas that they still had friendly feelings toward him, in spite of his opposition to this one measure. 42

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Pitman, Richmond, Va., December 31, 1857 as quoted in George F. Milton, The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War (New, York, 1934), 280. Hereafter cited as Milton, Douglas. Examples of Southern letters of support to Douglas during this period are: L. A. Bargy, Washington, D. C., August

Editorials in the Richmond Enquirer repeatedly defended Douglas during this storm; for example, a contributor declared: "Passing events in Kansas daily confirm the propriety of Senator Douglas' position, that the surest road to peace and quiet in Kansas, and the harmony of the Democratic party in Congress, is to reject that Constitution." And other pro-Douglas newspapers in the South continued their support of the Senator, claiming that he had not broken with the general tenets of the administration's policy, even though he opposed this one measure.

The successful resistance to the Lecompton constitution was hardly over when Douglas had to go back to Illinois to take the stump for re-election to the Senate. Besides having to meet Abraham Lincoln as the candidate of the young Republican party, Douglas had to overcome those in his own party whom Buchanan and his anti-Douglas members of the cabinet urged to oppose his re-election. Howell Cobb of Georgia, the Secretary of the Treasury, was particularly active against Douglas. 45

Various politicians who had been given offices in Illinois when Douglas' friends were removed during the Lecompton fight,

<sup>14, 1858;</sup> James Gardner, Augusta, Ga., October 12, 1858; Thomas Lloyd, Jacksonville, Ala., March 10, 1858, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>January 19, 1858. (Letter signed G.F.H.); see also Enquirer, January 8, 1858.

<sup>44</sup> See list in Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 298, n. 26.

<sup>45</sup>Howell Cobb to Alexander H. Stephens, September 8, 1858 in Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 442-443.

now waged war against his re-election. After Douglas' return to the state in July, much of his old popularity revived; normally Democratic newspapers worked loyally for his re-election. Because of the break with Buchanan, and because of the probable effects which Douglas' success or defeat would have on the presidential nomination in 1860 the Illinois contest attracted far more national interest than most state contests. 46

Southern politicians and their press organs were divided in their evaluation of Douglas! candidacy but some of those who had-turned against the Senator on the Lecompton issue now expressed hopes for his success against Lincoln. Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, made a trip to Chicago to try to make peace between Douglas and the administration forces. Such prominent Southerners as Vice-president John Breckenridge and Governor Henry Wise of Virginia openly endorsed Douglas! campaign in letters and speeches. Senator Albert G. Brown of Mississippi declared before his constituents, "... my sympathies are not with those who indulge in wholesale denunciation of him [Douglas] ... and I hope he may thrash Abolition Lincoln out of his boots."

An editorial in the New Orleans <u>Delta</u> said: "... inasmuch as this folly [Douglas' Lecompton stand] pertains to

<sup>46</sup> Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 210-225; Milton, Douglas, 295-298, 326-328.

<sup>47</sup>Cobb to Stephens, September 8, 1858 in <u>Toombs</u>, <u>Stephens. Cobb Correspondence</u>, 442; Wise to Douglas, <u>Letters</u>, 429, n. 1; speech at Hazelhurst, Miss., September 11, 1858, printed in <u>Speeches and Writings of the Honorable Albert G.</u>
Brown, ed. by M. W. Clusky (Philadelphia, 1859), 590-591.

a bygone Congressional specialty -- to a practical question disposed of by the last Congress -- we ought to forgive the harmless exhibition of it at Chicago, in view of the sound statesmanlike and wholesome ideas he expressed in regard to that great and most exigent question of the time, the grue political, social and industrial relation of the negro to the white man."48 The Richmond Enquirer continued its support and declared in an editorial, "This administration cannot afford to see Douglas The Memphis Appeal expressed a common sentiment when it wrote, "The PEOPLE of the South are for Douglas, and will be for him against Lincoln, despite every effort to the contrary."50 The real issue, the war between Douglas and the administration, was openly commented upon by one small Southern "How in the name of all that is patriotic and sacred paper: can the Southern people tolerate the relentless, unceasing, bitter warfare that the Administration of James Buchanan is making upon Senator Douglas, who, let him be what he may otherwise, is now fighting the battles of the South upon the soil of Illinois."51

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, July 30, 1858.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup>June 22, 1858.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Helena, Arkansas The Southern Shield, October 2, 1858.

<sup>51</sup> Tbid. With administration approval Democrats in Illinois put up a third candidate, Judge Sidney Breese, to oppose Douglas. Milton, Douglas, 229, 230; Douglas to Abraham Lincoln, July 24, 1858, Letters, 423.

Newspaper opposition to Douglas was led by the Administration's organ, the Washington States and Union, and as the Illinois campaign came to a close one of its editorials read:
"We are, then, opposed to the election of Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas, . . . We deny that the Democratic party are called upon to take the one or the other. . . . The Democratic party has strength, integrity and sagacity sufficient to confer its honors upon those who seek its welfare and promote its triumphs."52

Douglas' mail during this period contained many letters of support from the common people of the South. These came from various sections and showed a cross-section of opinion. editor of the Memphis Appeal wrote and asked for a denial of rumors that Douglas intended to leave the Democratic party after the November election. He declared his support for Douglas' candidacy provided that this rumor was unfounded. From Louisiana, F. L. Claiborne, a sugar planter and member of the state legislature, wrote: ". . . thousands of Democrats in the South sympathize with you in your present contest. Your defeat in Illinois ensures the defeat of the National Democracy." A correspondent from Alabama expressed a sentiment frequently found in the letters: "Our would be leaders are opposed to you but the People are for you." Another from Virginia suggested that Douglas received some support from former Whigs whose national organization had already

<sup>52</sup> September 15, 1858, as quoted in Southern Shield, October 2, 1858.

disintegrated: "Though a member of the Whig party I wish I had a thousand votes to give you in the pending contest."53

Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, perhaps the most renowned Whig in the country, expressed approval of Douglas and support for him in a letter addressed to Lincoln during the campaign. Crittenden explained his concurrence with Douglas in opposition to the Lecompton constitution and wrote:

. . . the position taken by him was full of sacrifice and full of hazard, yet he took it and defended it like a man! . . . and when it was understood that for the very course of conduct in which I had concurred and participated, the angry frown of the administration and its party was to be employed to defeat his re-election to the Senate, I could not but wish for his success and triumph over such persecution. I thought his re-election was necessary as a rebuke to the administration and a vindication of the great cause of popular rights and public justice. 54

At the end of a bitterly fought contest with Lincoln, Douglas was successful in the strength he had in the state legislature, which selected United States senators. His victory was only a partial one, however, for his enemies within the party did not stop their attacks and continued to vilify him in the hope of preventing his nomination for the presidency in 1860. Immediately after the election results were known, Howell Cobb wrote to Alexander H. Stephens: "Douglas is now

<sup>530</sup>ctober 8, 1858; October 26, 1858; November 2, 1858; August 25, 1858, Douglas MSS.

<sup>54</sup> July 29, 1858 in The Life of John J. Crittenden, ed. by Mrs. Chapman Coleman (Philadelphia, 1871), 163.

<sup>55</sup> Enough Douglas Democrats were elected to the Illinois state legislature to ensure his victory. The final vote was 54 to 46.

out of the way. His strength is gone even at the North. His strongest adherents admit that policy requires the nomination of a Southern man. No other Northern man professes to look for a nomination. Under these circumstances it seems to me that there should be no serious trouble at Charleston. "56 In spite of Cobb's efforts to influence Stephens, the latter continued to support Douglas, and the only result of Cobb's attempt to lower Douglas in Stephens' eyes was a cooling between the two Georgians.

After his victory Douglas traveled down the Mississippi stopping at Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans where he was greeted by his supporters. Before returning to Washington he and his wife went to Cuba for a vacation, for his margin of victory in Illinois was so narrow that he wished to avoid the spotlight until after the state legislature had met and confirmed his election. Again, his enemies in the Senate were at work. This time they removed him from the chairmanship of the Senate's committee on territories, a post which he had held for eleven years. This was one more indication of the continuation of the campaign to oust him from the leadership of the party and to assure the nomination of a "safe" Southern man at Charleston in 1860. 57 The next eighteen months were to see a continual escalation of the struggle between Douglas and anti-Douglas forces to win that nomination.

November 14, 1858, in Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 449.

<sup>57</sup> Milton, Douglas, 365; Nevins, Emergence of Lincoln, I, 420.

On the national level, then, the Democratic party was finishing the decade rife with factionalism and personal enmities. Realignment of forces was taking place based more on sectional interests than on traditional party lines. As talk of the next presidential contest began, the question seemed to be less, who would be the party's nominee and more, did the old allegiances still hold enough men to insure the Democratic party of victory over the Republicans.

## CHAPTER II

## HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON: THE PERSON AND THE POLITICIAN

The same issues which brought about factionalism on the national level in the Democratic party during the 1850's also divided state parties and augured ill for united action. Echoing Douglas' warning of impending dissolution of the Union if the slavery agitation were not stopped, Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia wrote to a fellow Southerner in 1850: "Is it not time for the South united as one man, to define the ultimatum and say to the North, 'Thus far and no farther shalt thou go'? I verily believe, that such a determination will save both the South and the Union." Douglas and Johnson represented different parts of the Union, had different political experiences, and responded to different pressures. They shared a common loyalty to the Union, however, and each worked to preserve that Union when many others were more concerned with sectional interests.

Johnson to Senator Henry S. Foote of Mississippi, January 18, 1850, Herschel V. Johnson Manuscripts, Perkins Library, Duke University, Letter Book No. 1, 67. Hereafter cited as Johnson MSS.

together in 1860 to wage a presidential campaign aimed at preserving the Union from the imminent danger of disunion.

Johnson was a native Georgian raised in modest circumstances. Unlike Douglas he remained in his native state throughout his early life and had the advantages of higher education and law school. He attended the University of Georgia from which he graduated in 1834. During his last year there he was married, attended a private law school, was admitted to the bar, and shortly after graduating became a father. As a lawyer he practiced first in Augusta, then in Jefferson County, Georgia. Through hard work and his skill at law, Johnson gradually became more prosperous and moved to a plantation in Burke County known as "Sandy Grove." Over the years Johnson's family increased until he had four sons and three daughters. An 1860 newspaper account also attested to the increase in his fortune when it listed his holdings as 3,652 acres valued at \$25,000, and 117 Negroes valued at \$93,600.

Loyalty to the Democratic party was traditional in the Johnson family and in the presidential election of 1840 Johnson became an active partisan and gave several speeches favoring the re-election of Van Buren. Johnson traced his rise in the Democratic party to this small beginning. Not only did the speeches he gave bring him to the attention of party leaders,

Percy Flippin, <u>Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia. States</u>
Rights Unionist (Richmond, Va., 1931), 1-3. Hereafter cited as Flippin, <u>Johnson</u>.

Junidentified newspaper clipping quoting from the New York Herald, September 26, 1860, Johnson MSS. Flippin, Johnson, 317.

but in his autobiography he declared, "My ambition was stimulated and I resolved to carve my name in some respectable place in the temple of fame."

During the 1840's Johnson served the party in various capacities: as delegate to nominating conventions, as unsuccessful congressional candidate, as editor of the Milledgeville Federal Union, the strongest party newspaper in the state.

These varied roles helped Johnson to become known to Democratic politicians throughout the state and prepared him to assume a larger role in politics.

In 1848 Governor George Towns appointed Johnson to fill the senate seat vacated by the resignation of Walter T. Colquitt two years before the expiration of his term. At that time, when only thirty-six years old, Johnson had an opportunity to know and work with some of the leading Democrats on the national level, notably, John C. Calhoun and Stephen Douglas. Johnson's two years in the Senate were highly significant, coming at a time when the controversy between the North and the South began to assume major proportions. Much of the time

Autobiography, 26, Johnson MSS. See also, Flippin, Johnson, 4-5. It was from this period that Johnson acquired the nickname "Coon-Killer." "The youthful Whig party... in its anxiety to win popular support, had adopted many homely symbols, including coonskins, pepperpods, etc." Because of his success in stump speaking against the Whigs, Johnson came to be called "Coon Killer." Horace Montgomery, Cracker Parties (Baton Rouge, La., 1950), 46n.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Flippin, <u>Johnson</u>, 7. Johnson served from February 14, 1848 to March 4, 1849, not really two years, but two sessions.

question of the extension of slavery in the territories newly acquired through the Mexican War. The Wilmot Proviso of 1846 proposed that, following the precedent of the Ordinance of 1787, slavery be excluded from these territories. Southerners considered this an attack on their way of life and therefore it failed to get Senate approval. The measure was repeatedly tacked on to other bills in hope that eventually Southern opposition would weaken. But such persistence on the part of its northern supporters only served to keep the slavery question in the forefront and led to greater sectional antagonism.

When the bill for the admission of Oregon was before the Senate in 1848, Johnson proposed to Douglas that an amendment be added to the bill which would extend the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific. Johnson persuaded Douglas to propose the amendment, since he felt that it would be more politic to have the proposal come from a Northern man. The amendment passed the Senate, but was defeated in the House where the Northerners had a majority. In giving an account of this incident Johnson said that it was "illustrative of the frankness of Douglas & his willingness to do all he could to serve the South and quiet Sectional agitation."

For a fuller discussion of the Wilmot Proviso see

J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction
(Boston, 1961), 83-84. Hereafter cited as Randall and Donald,
Civil War. The standard monograph on the Wilmot Proviso is
Chaplain Morrison, Democratic Politics and Sectionalism: The
Wilmot Proviso Controversy (Chapel Hill, 1967).

<sup>7</sup>Autobiography, 58.

Johnson expressed his early view on the question of the extension of slavery in the territories in a speech delivered in the Senate in 1848. In it he clearly enunciated the principle of non-intervention that later became the major plank of the platform on which he and Douglas would campaign in 1860. It was a speech which would have received Douglas' wholehearted approval. Writing several years later in his autobiography, Johnson quoted that speech. The wording of the original differed but expressed the same ideas:

In the deliberations of this body, the question of slavery should never be touched. By the Constitution, Congress has no jurisdiction whatever, over the subject. If all parties would stand upon that platform, no note of discord, in relation to this delicate question, would ever disturb the harmony of our deliberations. It belongs to the people of the territory which may be acquired.

Before the question of slavery in the territories was settled, Johnson's term in the Senate expired. On November 13, 1849, the state legislature elected him to a four-year term on the circuit court. Of this new position, Johnson wrote:

<sup>8</sup> Tbid., 51-52. This speech was not given March 16, 1848, as Johnson says, but on July 7, 1848. Cf. Congressional Globe, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., App., 887-894. The quotation from the autobiography is used rather than one from the original speech because the latter is very long and complex. Johannsen, Douglas, 238-239 summarizes Northern and Southern views on this point.

<sup>9</sup> Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia. 1849-1850 (Milledgeville, Ga., 1849), 57. At this time the Georgia state legislature often held elections for United States Senators as much as two or three years before the office was to be vacated. William C. Dawson was elected by the legislature, November 13, 1847, for the term beginning March 4, 1849. Hence Johnson was appointed after Dawson's election and knew he would serve only a short time. Journal of the Senate of the State of Georgia, 1847, 64. Governor Towns' appointment

My election to the Bench . . . withdrew me from direct connection with politics, and I endeavored to avail myself of it, as the means of keeping myself entirely aloof. But I could scarcely do so. During the following session of Congress, . . . Mr. Clay's series of measures for the organization of territories, known as "the Compromise Measures," was adopted. It produced great excitement in the South, and it was almost impossible to resist a participation in the discussion which it elicited. I did avoid the hustings. But my pen was not idle.10

As with most compromises, this one failed to satisfy all segments of the population. Two factions developed in the political circles of Georgia. One group led by the Democrat Cobb and the leading Whigs, Stephens and Toombs, felt the Compromise provided sufficient protection to Southern rights if the North lived up to its provisions, especially that which called for stricter enforcement of the fugitive slave laws. Johnson joined the group opposed to the Compromise and denounced the measure as an encroachment on state rights. Regarding the Compromise, Johnson wrote to Calhoun, "I seriously fear that the people of the South are not properly awake to the danger,—not thoroughly nerved to united resistance." The essential point, Johnson thought, was that the North must recognize the equality of the states with reference to all matters and was

of Johnson may well have been a token of appreciation to Johnson who had withdrawn his name at the nominating convention of 1847 and made Towns' nomination possible. Cf. Judge Richard H. Clarke, Memoirs of Judge Richard H. Clarke (Atlanta, 1898), 183-184.

<sup>10</sup> Autobiography, 62.

<sup>11</sup> The term "state rights" is used following U. B. Phillips, Georgia and State Rights (Washington, 1902). Letter of Johnson to John C. Calhoun, July 20, 1849, in The Correspondence of John C. Calhoun, ed. by J. Franklin Jameson, Vol. II, (Washington, 1899), 1198.

not just a quibble over the question of the extension of slavery.

Division of feeling over the Compromise was widespread throughout the South and in Georgia led to the realignment of political parties. Old labels no longer seemed to fit and were temporarily discarded. "Practically all Georgians believed that the rights of the South had been invaded. The point of difference was whether the encroachments made forcible resistance advisable." Those who favored acceptance of the Compromise as the best which could be achieved were led by Cobb, Stephens, and Toombs and called themselves the Constitutional Union Party, or more commonly "Union men."

Those who thought resistance to the Compromise was called for labeled themselves Southern rights men, and it was to this group that Johnson belonged. This party, which followed Calhoun's call for an all-Southern party, came mostly from the Democrats and looked to united Southern action to prevent further aggression on state rights by Northerners, especially abolitionists. Some of the Southern rights leaders, such as Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina and William L. Yancey of Alabama, were so extreme in their views as to be dubbed "Fire-eaters" because they openly sought secession and the setting up of a Southern confederacy. This was not, however, the main characteristic of the group. Rather, the Southern

<sup>12</sup>Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, 165. Phillips gives a clear account of the whole complex situation of Georgia politics resulting from the Compromise of 1850.

Rights party believed that since the North was now in the majority, if Southern rights were to be protected at all, it could be only through the South's uniting on its demands for equal rights in the Union. 13 Johnson belonged to this latter, more moderate wing of the party.

Before the Compromise of 1850 was fully accepted talk of secession from the Union was widespread in the South and the governor of Georgia called a state convention to decide upon the course the state should take in regard to the Compromise. Prior to the meeting of this convention Johnson was asked on several occasions to give his views and he did so in some detail. It is from his record during this period that his enemies later branded him a disunionist. Careful reading of the documents which Johnson produced in 1850 reveals that he did not favor secession per se, but rather, in Calhounian fashion, the Georgian urged united action on the part of the South in presenting its demands to the North. He never denied the right of secession, but he felt that if the compromise measures were lived up to fully, they did not constitute sufficient grounds for disunion. 14

In the canvass preceding the state convention, Johnson opposed Cobb, the leading Democrat of the state. Cobb had chosen to work for the acceptance of the Compromise and aligned

Randall and Donald, <u>Civil War</u>, 84, 90. On Yancey see Dwight Dumond, <u>The Secession Movement</u>. 1860-1861 (New York, 1931), 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> Autobiography, 63.

himself with the prominent Whigs of the state. In a long letter published in the newspapers of Georgia under the pseudonym "Oglethorpe," Johnson attacked Cobb's views as those of a submissionist who would ultimately lose everything to Northern aggression. Johnson argued that submission was equivalent to giving the North a free hand to carry out its tyranny over the South. The letter ended with an impassioned plea not to surrender constitutional rights to equal place in the Union. "Let us cling to the Union as long as there is hope; but when, in its name and by its authority, the act of injustice and tyranny shall be consum[m]ated, let us 'strike for independence,' and bid scornful defiance to all pitiful th[r]eats, whether they emanate from Northern federalists or Southern traitors." 15

From a modern vantage point this sentiment may be considered disunionist. In ante-bellum Southern politics, however, admitting the <u>right</u> of secession was a <u>sine qua non</u> for being active in any party. The distinction between factions was rather the cause for which disunion might be adopted. Some, like Rhett and Yancey, saw a Southern confederacy as a positive good and worked for its accomplishment. More moderate Southerners, Johnson among them, saw secession as a last ditch measure and primarily to be used as a threat for gaining recognition of equal rights from the North. In a letter of 1851 Johnson stated clearly his view of the way in which resistance

<sup>15</sup>Unidentified newspaper clipping in Johnson MSS. Johnson wrote his name below "Oglethorpe" at the end of the article.

would work toward preservation of the Union. "The integrity of the Union is not assailed by the Southern Rights party in Georgia. Its true friends are those who insist upon maintaining the rights resulting from the Sovereignty of the States. Its real enemies are those who, from behind it, as a 'masked battery' level their destructive artillery against its strongest outposts, by counselling submission to aggression." 16

The Unionists won the delegate election and when the convention delegates met at Milledgeville, the state capital, they agreed upon a document which came to be known as the "Georgia Platform." It said that Georgia would stand by the Compromise, but that if any further encroachments on Southern rights should take place the attitude of Georgia would be reversed and disunion would be likely to follow. Again, it must be noted that the friends and opponents of the Platform did not disagree in principle but only in the answer to the practical question of whether or not infringement of Southern rights had been great enough to warrant disruption. 17

Though the Georgia Platform was clearly a victory for the Union group, the State Rightists were, on the whole, ready to acquiesce in light of the ultimatum contained at the end of the document warning that any further infringement on Southern

<sup>16</sup> Johnson to Messrs. Robert A. White, Turner Clayton, et al., August 30, 1851, printed in unidentified newspaper clipping in Johnson MSS.

<sup>17</sup>U. B. Phillips, Georgia and State Rights, 165.

rights would probably cause the dissolution of the Union. 18
Johnson's personal position was that the Platform represented an undermining of Southern rights and would make the defense of those rights even more difficult in the future. As an early historian put it, "Without favoring disruption he boldly advocated southern rights and refused to endorse the action of the State convention, which framed the Georgia platform." 19

During the gubernatorial election of the following year the party realignment begun in 1850 was carried on and even strengthened. Howell Cobb ran on the Union ticket and was opposed by Charles McDonald, the Southern Rights candidate.

Johnson supported McDonald, feeling that the earlier enthusiasm for Southern unity might be revived. When Cobb was elected by a considerable majority, the Southern Rights party suffered its second major defeat in a year and needed to reassess its position. What the Southern Rightists could not have realized at the time was that "although this campaign doomed [their party], it may well have paved the way for a secessionist victory in 1861 through the thorough indoctrination in secession theory it gave the voters."

<sup>18</sup> Avery Craven, "Georgia and the South," Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXIII (September, 1939), 219-236.

<sup>19</sup> Lucian L. Knight, Reminiscences of Famous Georgians, Vol. II (Atlanta, 1908), 303.

N. B. Beck, "The Secession Debate in Georgia," in Anti-slavery and Disunion. 1858-1861, ed. by J. Jeffrey Auer, (New York, 1963), 334; see also, Montgomery, Cracker Parties, 41-43 and Richard Shryock, Georgia and the Union in 1850 (Philadelphia, 1926), 356.

During the year following Cobb's election Johnson decided that after the adoption of the Georgia Platform the reasons for the new party organization were no longer present and he worked to restore the national Democratic party in the state. He became chairman of a committee which had this as its purpose. Gradually, too, the Unionists returned to the Whig or Democratic parties. All was not smooth, however, as Johnson and other former Southern Rightists tried for a time to keep Howell Cobb from re-entering the ranks of the Democracy because he had worked with the Whigs during the recent crisis. Gradually these rifts were healed and the restored Democratic party of Georgia took part in the national convention at Baltimore in 1852 which nominated Franklin Pierce for the presidency. Johnson was a delegate to this convention and spent much of the summer and fall stump-speaking in Georgia for the election of Pierce.21

The final reunification of the Democratic party in Georgia was to be accomplished at a meeting in Atlanta on September 18, 1852, at which time the Union Democrats proposed to join with the Southern Rights Democrats to put a single electoral slate in the field. This proposal was met with hostility by some of the more extreme Southern Rights men who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Autobiography, 66, 52-55. Notes of speech given in behalf of Pierce's election in Johnson MSS. See also, Montgomery, <u>Cracker Parties</u>, 52-55. Montgomery says that during this period of reorganization, "among Georgia's foremost leaders only A. H. Stephens and H. V. Johnson would seem to have been doing any very serious searching for answers to the riddle of human affairs." 58.

had already chosen electors, but it was welcomed by the moderate group. Johnson showed that he had overcome his earlier partisan feelings when he offered to resign his place as an elector so that there might be a place for a Union Democrat. Such efforts proved useless, however, when the Union Democrats failed to reach agreement among themselves and caused further factional divisions. Johnson's efforts to conciliate the Union faction did not win complete approval among the Southern Rights men In his autobiography he related that, "They [some of the Southern Rights men] had become so embittered by the apparent obstinacy of the Union Wing and so hostile to its leaders, that they were opposed to all further effort at Compromise and conciliation." In defense of his willingness to accept the Union men he wrote, "There was really no principle involved and I am always willing to meet opponents on middle ground, where by so doing I can accomplish good without the sacrifice of truth and right."22

By the summer of 1853 the Democratic party was sufficiently reunited to nominate Johnson for governor. In his letter accepting the nomination, Johnson wrote: "The recent divisions in our party, resulting from honest differences of opinion, touching a subject of great delicacy and embarrassment, have passed away, with the issues that produced them. The temporary alienation that existed has ceased."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Autobiography, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Undated letter accepting nomination, Johnson MSS.

This estimate of the extent to which the party divisions were healed was probably somewhat of an overstatement, though the fact that the party was able to agree on a single nominee was some proof of its being at least partially true. Dissatisfaction with the nomination was expressed by some within the party. Just after the convention one correspondent wrote to Cobb, "The nomination of H. V. Johnson has fallen still-born. Not a shout or an approving word has followed it; even his old friends (the S[outhern] R[ights] Wing) take it coldly. One of them, . . . into whose support he will be dragooned, (John A. Jones) says openly that he will not vote for Johnson under any circumstances."<sup>24</sup>

A month later, however, another correspondent told Cobb of the improving fortunes of the Johnson nomination. "I think myself that Johnson's prospects are getting better. A month ago I thought Jenkins would sweep the State; I now doubt seriously if he can be elected."25

A pivotal question in the campaign was whether or not Cobb would come out publicly in favor of Johnson's election. To do so would be to repudiate or ignore previous differences and he was urged by many of his supporters not to do so. In spite of such partisan advice Cobb came to north Georgia late in the campaign and made an effort on Johnson's behalf. This

Alexander Morton to Howell Cobb, July 2, 1853, Howell Cobb Manuscripts, Duke University Library.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>William Hope Hull to Howell Cobb, August 16, 1853, in <u>Toombs, Stephens, Cobb Correspondence</u>, 334.

was probably not without some tinge of self-interest since by then it seemed likely that Johnson would win, and Cobb was interested in being elected by the state legislature to the Senate seat which would become vacant the next year. With Johnson's support it seemed likely that this ambition might be fulfilled.

During the campaign the opposition accused Johnson of being a secessionist and warned the voters that after his victory he would lead the state to withdraw from the Union. 26 In answer to the opposition's question of whether or not Johnson dissented from the immediate secession stand of "Rhett & Co." in 1850, the Milledgeville Federal Union replied:

He did. We well remember being present with him in this office, at the time of the meeting in Macon, and he expressed himself to several gentlemen, as opposed entirely to the action of that meeting, if <u>disunion</u> or <u>secession</u> was its object. Judge Johnson never had advocated secession for any past cause—and all attempts of his enemies to prove that he has, have resulted just as the case before us.27

The results of the election showed Johnson victorious

but by only 510 votes out of a total of almost 95,000 votes

cast. In his autobiography Johnson wrote of the election, "It

is due to truth to record that the Constitutional Union Democrats

gave me almost unanimous support. Gov. Cobb acted handsomely

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>The opposition in this case was a conglomeration of Whigs, dissatisfied Constitutional Democrats who "carefully avoided giving a name [to their party]." Montgomery, <u>Cnacker Parties</u>, 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>August 30, 1853. Newspaper clipping named and dated by hand in Johnson MSS.

and magnanimously. He took special pains to let it be notorious that he did so. . . . His course undoubtedly contributed materially to my success."28

The election of Johnson seemed to be a tangible sign of the reunification of the Democratic party in Georgia and though not among his stated aims as governor, Johnson worked for party unity during his first term. Almost immediately this new unity was put to the test when the question of a nominee for the Senate seat arose. In the organization of state government Johnson had appointed to state offices men from "the discordant elements of his party," in an effort to attain harmony. These efforts were not enough, however, to give Cobb the Senate seat he desired. Instead, a compromise candidate in the person of Alfred Iverson, who was acceptable to both Union and State Rights men, was elected.

The two years of Johnson's first term saw another gradual realignment of parties in Georgia. The Democrats became stronger than ever and at least superficially united. The gradual dissolution of the National Whig party by 1855 brought both Stephens and Toombs into the Democratic party with their considerable talents and large followings. The Whig party was replaced by a weaker so-called American or Know-Nothing party which backed nativism and to which Toombs and Stephens were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Autobiography, 80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Milledgeville, Ga., <u>Southern Recorder</u>, January 10, 1854 as quoted in Helen Ione Greene, "Politics in Georgia, 1853-54," <u>Georgia Historical Quarterly</u>, XXX (September, 1946), 209.

unwilling to give their allegiance. 30

Though seemingly greatly strengthened and reunited by 1855, the Democratic party itself was about to undergo a new round of internal division. Just before the expiration of Johnson's first term as governor, he received a letter from John H. Howard, a spokesman of the Southern Union movement, urging him to call a state convention for the suspension of parties and the formation of an all-Southern party opposed to Northern abolitionists. Johnson held his response to this letter until after the state Democratic convention had nominated him for a second term, and then he pointed out that his acceptance of that candidacy should "apprise you more forcibly than I could express in words, of my utter and entire dissent from the line of policy which you urge." In explaining his refusal to participate in an all-Southern party Johnson wrote, "If the South sectionalizes herself, the North will take a similar position; and being in the minority, we must either submit to dishonor and degradation, or dissolve the Union. There is no avoiding one of these alternatives, and, therefore, I am for standing by our Northern friends, for the present, as the best course to maintain our rights in the Union." The letter concluded that as long as the North stood by the

<sup>30</sup> Both Toombs and Stephens supported the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854. In the election of 1855 Stephens ran for Congress as an independent but joined the Democrats in denouncing the Know-Nothings. Toombs publicly declared himself a Democrat in November, 1855, and Stephens on February 2, 1856, though both had been working with the party since 1854. Montgomery, Cracker Parties, Chapter VIII.

Compromise the best interests of the South dictated that she refrain from the formation of a sectional party. Johnson finally reminded the sectional group that, "we are, in honor, bound to stand by them—[the Northern National Democrats] until it shall be demonstrated, that our alliance with them is unavailing for the prosection of our rights under the Constitution."<sup>31</sup>

After a campaign centering on the emotional appeals and secretiveness of the Know-Nothings and complicated by a candidate of the Temperance party, Johnson was re-elected by a far larger majority than in 1851. This time the vote was 54,461 for Johnson; 43,821 for Garnet Andrews, the Know-Nothing candidate; and 6,261 for Basil Overby, the Temperance candidate. In accounting for the increased majority which he received Johnson noted in his autobiography, "In this contest, I had the powerful aid of Mr. Toombs and Mr. Stephens and many of their followers and admirers. For such was the odiousness of 'Know-Nothingism,' that they fought with Herculean energy." 32

The Democratic party in Georgia then went into the presidential election of 1856 greater in numbers since the demise of the Whigs, but still harboring two factions, one more national in tone, the other more sectional though unwilling to break completely with Northern Democrats. The first of these factions was headed by Johnson and Stephens; the second by Toombs and Cobb. Of the four, only Stephens had remained

min!

<sup>31</sup> Johnson to John H. Howard, June 11, 1855, Johnson MSS.

<sup>32</sup> Autobiography, 83.

consistent with the position he had supported in 1850. Without a burning issue to divide the sides, however, the presence of factions in the party in the middle of the decade did not seem of great importance. Some notion of the harmony which generally existed at this time was evidenced in a letter of Toombs in which he wrote of Johnson, "I firmly believe he is sincere and reliable upon the Georgia platform and would risk himself in defence of great public principles—and that is a rare virtue."

At the National Democratic convention in Cincinnati in 1856 Johnson received a certain amount of national notice when he was nominated for vice-president by the Georgia delegation and received thirty-one votes on the first ballot. Alluding to this honor Johnson recorded in his autobiography: "I received a very flattering vote . . . as the nominee for the Vice President of the United States, on the ticket with Mr. Buchanan. But . . . Mr. Jno. E. Ward, having been elected to the Presidency of the Convention, it was thought Georgia was sufficiently honored." John Breckenridge of Kentucky was named as Buchanan's running mate.

During the Buchanan-Fremont campaign of 1856 Johnson made several speeches in the North in which he explored the implications of the growth of the Republican party on the temper

Toombs to Thomas W. Thomas, February 9, 1856 in Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 360.

<sup>34</sup> Proceedings. 1856, 66.

<sup>35</sup> Autobiography, 123.

of the South. In a letter directed to a newspaper which had criticized the speech he made at Philadelphia, Johnson summarized the demands of the South, "All they [the South] ask, or ever have asked, or ever will ask, is to be let alone; keep the subject out of Congress, organize the territories irrespective of the question of slavery; let the people settle it in their own way; . . This is the doctrine of the Kansas Act and therefore, the South is in rayor of its maintainance. Why should the North object to it?" From this passage it is obvious that at this time Johnson's view of the peaceable solution to the slavery agitation was similar to Douglas' view.

Upon the expiration of his second term as governor, Johnson retired to his plantation, and again resolved to quit the political arena for a while. He had been active in state and national political affairs most of the time since 1840. Again, as in 1850, a political crisis caused Johnson to leave his plantation for active political concerns. This time the crisis began within the Democratic party when the national convention was unable to agree on platform or candidate for the 1860 presidential campaign. This split as it affected both Douglas and Johnson and their relations with the South will be the subject of the remaining pages of this inquiry.

Johnson to the <u>North American and Gazette</u>, October 6, 1856. Handwritten copy in Johnson MSS.

## CHAPTER III

## QUEST FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION-1860

Though many of the incidental circumstances surrounding presidential elections in the United States have changed since the mid-19th century one feature has not, namely the speculation as to who the candidates will be in the next election, speculation that begins almost before the newly elected president has taken the oath of office. During the nineteenth century though lip service was given to the principle that the office should seek the man and not the man the office, in practice presidential ambitions were only thinly veiled; aspirants, their supporters and opponents, the press and the common people all indulged in both covert and overt maneuvers designed to capture the nomination for a chosen favorite. Discussion of possible candidates for 1860 was increased by President Buchanan's announcement shortly after his election that he would not consider a second term.

Among Democrats the candidacy question was whether the nomination would go to Douglas or to someone else, the names of the latter being legion. As has been discussed in the first



two chapters, the Democracy had become increasingly divided during the decade of the 1850's on both the national and state levels. Such divisions greatly complicated the question of candidate and of platform since both personality and principle were involved in the differences. And in both cases Douglas was the center of these differences. Through his years in Congress he had gathered not only strong friends, but implacable enemies: in each group some were reacting to Douglas' personality and some to his political principles. After the 1858 congressional elections were over politicians and editors devoted more and more attention to the question of who would be the candidate of each party in 1860.

The first references to the Democratic convention in Douglas' letters appeared in March, 1859, just a year before the party was to convene in Charleston, South Carolina, to nominate its presidential candidate. At first Douglas spoke only in general terms of the need for the party to nominate a candidate and present a platform which would uphold the doctrine of popular sovereignty and resist the demand by Southerners for congressional intervention on the question of slavery in the territories. In June, however, in response to a direct inquiry about his availability as a presidential candidate, Douglas wrote:

If, as I have full faith they will, the Democratic party shall determine in the Presidential election of 1860 to adhere to the principles embodied in the Compromise measures of 1850, and ratified by the people in the Presidential election of 1852, and reaffirmed in the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, and incorporated into the Cincinnati platform in 1856, as expounded by Mr. Buchanan

in his letter accepting the nomination, and approved by the people in his election—in that event my friends will be at liberty to present my name to the convention, if they see proper to do so.

If, on the contrary, it shall become the policy of the Democratic party, which I cannot anticipate, to repudiate these time honored principles, . . . in such an event, I could not accept the nomination if tendered to me. I

Three things in this letter were of importance in relation to the coming convention: Douglas' declaration that his name could be presented if, and only if, the platform previously adopted by the party should be its standard again; his absolute refusal to run on any other platform; and his failure to measure realistically the forces which opposed him. An indication of this opposition had been given the preceding February when the two senators from Mississippi, Jefferson Davis and Albert G. Brown, had challenged Douglas to defend his stand on popular sovereignty. Davis referred to the doctrine as "a delusive gauze thrown over the public mind" and accused Douglas of being "full of heresy."2 The charges needed an answer, and Douglas again explained his stand during Senate debates. Feeling that the somewhat impromptu speeches he delivered there were not a complete explanation, however, he began work on an essay to be published in Harper's Weekly of September 1, 1859.

louglas to J. B. Dorr, June 22, 1859, Letters, 446-447. This letter was written in response to one from Dorr, editor of the Dubuque, Iowa, <u>Daily Express and Herald</u> asking if Douglas was willing to be a candidate, June 13, 1859, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Congressional Globe, 35th Cong., 2d Sess., 1247, 1257, February 23, 1859.

Douglas intended the article to be a complete explanation of his ideas on the slavery issue which was so dividing The article appeared under the title, "The Dividing Americans. Line Between Federal and Local Authority: Popular Sovereignty in the Territories." Douglas considered the article simply a summary of the policy he had followed throughout his congressional career and in accord with a much earlier statement he had made on the application of principles to practice: man is only consistent," he had then avowed, "who follows out his principles and adapts his measures to them in view of the condition of things he finds in existence at the period of time when it is necessary to make the application." In the Harper's article Douglas tried to show that popular sovereignty was based on the historical practice of America as far back as colonial times. To him, the arguments seemed self-evident and convincing. He thought that this exposition would quiet those who kept questioning him as to his stand on the slavery issue.4

Douglas' article was, in the style of the day, long and wordy. He summarized his main theme in the concluding paragraph which read: "The principle, under our political system, is that every distinct political community, loyal to the Constitution and the Union, is entitled to all the rights,

<sup>3&</sup>quot;Proceedings at the Banquet of the Jackson Democratic Association, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1852 (n.p., n.d.), 3.

Robert Johannsen, "Stephen A. Douglas, 'Harper's Magazine,' and Popular Sovereignty," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLV (March, 1959), 606-631. Hereafter cited as Johannsen, "Harper's Magazine."

privileges, and immunities of self-government in respect to their local concerns and internal policy, subject only to the Constitution."<sup>5</sup>

The gist of the article was that a territorial population could legislate for itself of all questions of local government including that of slavery. This was Douglas' interpretation of popular sovereignty. To many Southerners, however, popular sovereignty had quite a different meaning. They saw it as applicable to a territory only when that territory was ready to move into statehood and only at that time could the question of slavery be decided. To the Southerners, non-interference with slavery during the territorial stage and popular sovereignty were synonymous. Interference with slavery from any legislative source whatever was equally objectionable. The sole arbiter in all cases was to be the judiciary.

The reception which Douglas' article received in the South was a far cry from what he had expected. The Richmond Enquirer, which had been his staunch supporter through the Lecompton affair, now declared against him. An editorial published immediately after the <a href="Harper's">Harper's</a> article appeared declared: "Let Douglas's last essay be published to the people of the South, and not one Southern State will consent to yield him a

<sup>5</sup>Harper's Magazine, XIX (September 1, 1859), 537.

<sup>6</sup> Congressional Globe, 35th Cong., 2d Sess., 1257, February 23, 1859; Robert Johannsen, "Stephen A. Douglas and the South," Journal of Southern History, XXXIII (February, 1967), 35.

single vote at Charleston."<sup>7</sup> Another writer accused Douglas of becoming a "political Jesuit, who, lost in the contemplation of his ends, is blind to the enormity of his means."<sup>8</sup>

The New Orleans Bee was more moderate in its reaction.

Our opinion is this: if as an honest statesman, he [Douglas] was desirous of placing his views upon record, without regard to the possible damage his ambition might sustain, he did right; but if he promulgated them with the expectation that they would prove a fine stroke of policy, and strengthen his claim to the highest honors in the republic, he made a signal mistake. We are yet to hear of a single public man who ever made a stepping stone to the Presidency of his letters on important subjects of national concern.9

interpretation of popular sovereignty were concerned over the repeated statements he made. Even before the publication of the Harper's article, Governor James Jones of Tennessee had written to Douglas urging that he curtail his public utterances: "I don't want you to write any more letters. Many great men have committed suicide in this way. Stand on your present record and let the people rest." The warning came too late and perhaps would have been ignored since Douglas seemed convinced that the people had a right to know exactly what his thinking was, and that if they understood his policy would support it. In a series of public letters to William F. Samford, John Forsyth, the editor of the Mobile, Alabama, Register tried

<sup>7</sup>August 30, 1859.

<sup>8</sup>Percy Roberts, "Mr. Douglas! Article on Popular Sovereignty," <u>DeBow's Review</u>, XXVIII (December, 1859), 632.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>September 7, 1859.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>September 1, 1859, Douglas MSS.

to keep pro-Douglas sentiment alive in the deep South, but it was, on the whole, a vain struggle. 11

Some Southerners who disagreed with Douglas' stand on the slavery question nevertheless admired him as a person and recognized his importance to the party. Senator Thomas Clingman of North Carolina recalled that after the heated Senate debates of February, 1859, he had warned Douglas that keeping the slavery issue to the fore could only work to Buchanan's advantage. Clingman's reaction to the <a href="Harper's">Harper's</a> article was that, "the wisdom of Job's prayer that his enemy might write a book was never, perhaps, made more manifest." He further commented that, "Mr. Douglas though a most powerful debater, was a weak writer." Robert Toombs, writing to Alexander H. Stephens made this assessment: "Douglas, I think begins to see the great folly of his <a href="Harper">Harper</a> article and would recall it if he could gladly. But the folly is written and must stand to plague him the balance of his political life." "12

Douglas' enemies set out to make whatever profit they could from the article. The President set Attorney General Jeremiah Black to write an anonymous answer to be published in a subsequent issue of <a href="Harper's">Harper's</a>. This response led to a series

ll "Letters of Hon. John Forsyth, of Alabama to Wm. F. Samford, Esq., in Defence of Stephen A. Douglas," dated September 6 to October 19, 1859. Pamphlet in Duke University Library Rare Book Room.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas L. Clingman, Speeches and Writings of Thomas L. Clingman (Raleigh, N.C., 1877), 450. Hereafter cited as Clingman, Speeches and Writings. December 26, 1859, Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 452.

of pamphlets between Douglas and Black which served to keep the issue before the people. Though supposedly written anonymously, Black's authorship of the articles was widely known. Slidell wrote to Buchanan from New Orleans, "Black's reply to Douglas' magazine article is indeed an extinguisher, it is admirable in manner as well as matter." Black received a letter from South Carolina commending him for "the service you have rendered the South by your learned and masterly refutation of the heresies of Mr. Douglas."13

In the months preceding the Charleston Convention there was abundant evidence of Douglas' eagerness to gain Southern support for the nomination, of his recognition of opposition from Southerners, of his Southern friends' working toward his nomination, of his enemies' working to prevent it, and of independent parties who predicted it with certainty. One fact emerged from these various groups: Douglas was the central figure in the Democratic arena. Evidence of all this in the way of speeches, letters, and newspaper editorials is so extensive that only samples can be given here.

The realist in Douglas recognized that his refusal to agree with the changed Southern interpretation of the doctrine of popular sovereignty would cost him the support of some in that section. In a letter to Henry K. McCoy, of Georgia, Douglas wrote: "If this [the Cincinnati Platform] is not

<sup>13</sup> September 28, 1859, James Buchanan Manuscripts, Penssylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa. Hereafter cited as Buchanan MSS. W. W. Simmons to Jeremiah Black, December 2, 1859, in Black Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

satisfactory to some of our Southern friends we shall regret but cannot avoid it. . . . I firmly believe I am right, and cannot change my opinions at this late day even to be President. "14" But, though there was a hint in this letter of Douglas' realization of Southern opposition, just a few days later he wrote to an Illinois politician: "Our friends in the South are in fine spirits and gaining every day and confident of success. There will be no difficulty in Charleston." 15

Much later, February 19, 1860, he showed the same optimism: "There will be no serious difficulty in the South. The last few weeks has worked a perfect revolution in that section.

They all tell me and write me that all will be right if our Northern friends will fearlessly represent the wishes and feelings of the Democracy in their own States. "16

Letters to Douglas in this period indicate support for him by at least some in the South, though there is also the admission of opposition to his candidacy. After Douglas' victory over Lincoln in 1858, a supporter from Tennessee wrote, "The eyes of the South are turning toward you as the sheet anchor of their hopes to save the Union from the fangs of

<sup>14</sup>Douglas to Henry McCoy, Americus, Georgia, September 27, 1859, in <u>Letters</u>, 469.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas to John A. McClernand, October 1, 1859, Ibid., 474.

Democratic politics, February 19, 1860, Ibid., 485.

Northern fanatics and Southern fire-eaters." One friend from Virginia wrote, "I honestly believe you are the only man to beat the combined isms in 1860."

In response to Douglas' announcement of his availability as a candidate, a Texan wrote, "Your letter to 'J. B. Dorr, Esq.' is enough to itself satisfy 'Southern Democracy' that your name should be brought forward as the 'Union' candidate—the 'States' rights' candidate—the Democratic candidate for the next presidency." While an editor of the Fort Smith, Arkansas, Herald declared: "I know that some of our members of Congress are against you but some are for you but we do not belong to any body and are induced to support you because we believe you would make a national and not a sectional President." The letter continued by expressing a sentiment found very often in letters to Douglas: "You are held here in high estimation by the common people, and that notwithstanding the malicious course of the President and many members of Congress and office holders."

As the time for the Charleston convention grew nearer,

John Forsyth indicated both support and a realistic appraisal

<sup>17</sup> I. W. Grimsly (?) to Douglas, January 1, 1859, Douglas MSS. A sheet anchor is a large strong anchor carried in the waist of a ship; something that constitutes a main support or dependence in danger, the best or surest hope or refuge.

<sup>18</sup>A. R. Harris, M.D., to Douglas, January 3, 1859, Douglas MSS.

<sup>19</sup> I. G. Cleaveland to Douglas, July 10, 1859, Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>John Carnall to Douglas, July 11, 1859, <u>Toid</u>.

of the strength of the opposition:

Never in the history of our country, and in the course of this western experiment of man's capacity to take care of and promote his own political well-being, have public men like yourself been so much needed. I am doing my poor endeavor to breast the storm of sectionalism here, as you have done in both sections of an exasperated union. . . . I take the ground of popular sovereignty as the bond to which we have placed our seals and plighted our faith. 21

Others echoed this admission of sectional opposition to Douglas' candidacy among Southern politicians. One writer who was active in Louisiana politics explained: "The great danger seems to me will grow out of the villainy and machinations of disappointed expectants creating divisions in southern sentiment that may greatly endanger the general results." A supporter from Mississippi added that, "... the great body of the people of my state are with you. I know something of my section; take away the politicians and you are all powerful then."

John Forsyth made these general indictments more specific when he wrote concerning the leadership of William L. Yancey of the Alabama delegation: "My fear is that Yancey and his Salamanders will not face the music, stand up to their instructions & leave the convention . . . they are convinced already that the People are dead against the action of the [State] Convention." He ended, however, on a hopeful note,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Forsyth to Douglas, December 12, 1859, <u>Ibid</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Frederick Hart to Douglas, July 6, 1859, <u>Thid</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Samuel Marye to Douglas, February 7, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

"Your cause grows apace."24

Support for Douglas was evident in other writings besides those directed to him. John Bouligny, congressman from Louisiana, wrote to a group of his constituents in February, 1860, in defense of Douglas' candidacy and of the necessity of that candidacy for the continuance of the Union. Speaking of the importance of the nomination made at Charleston, he argued:

"I believe that with Stephen A. Douglas, victory is certain; with any other man, the contest is at least a risk." In answer to the common objection to Douglas in the South, that he was not trustworthy on the slavery question, Bouligny wrote, "My impression is, if we in the South cannot trust Douglas on the negro question, we do not deserve to have defenders of our rights at the North." 25

Another congressman, Albert Rust of Arkansas, announced to his constituents in support of Douglas' candidacy:

If Judge Douglas shall be the nominee of the Charleston Convention, I will support him with pleasure. I believe that under an administration of which he was at the head the rights of the South would be held as inviolable, and as effectively protected as they have been under the present administration or as they would be under the administration of any man in the Confederacy, North or South.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Forsyth to Douglas, February 9, 1860, <u>Toid</u>.
"Salamanders" were "mythical and not clearly defined animals having the power to endure fire without harm." <u>OED</u>, hence Forsyth's application of this term to the followers of Yancey, the leader of the fire-eaters.

<sup>25</sup> John Bouligny, Washington, D.C., to S. H. Fulton, George Clark, et al., February 29, 1860, printed in Augusta, Ga., <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, April 8, 1860. Bouligny refused to resign his seat after secession. A similar letter was written by Miles Taylor, another Louisiana congressman to his constituents and published in the New Orleans <u>Bee</u>, February 6, 1860.

I have entire confidence in his moral courage, his strength, his will, his ability, his political integrity and his patriotism. 26

A letter to the editor of the Memphis, Tennessee <u>Appeal</u> took an equivocal stand which praised the Buchanan administration but also indicated support for Douglas: "I glory in the fact that Stephen A. Douglas is a Democrat; and I would rejoice to see him the chosen standard bearer of his party in the next Presidential contest. I would be proud to see the American people honor him by placing him in the highest office in their gift."<sup>27</sup>

Unwittingly, Douglas' enemies also gave evidence of his popularity in the South. Thomas Cobb wrote to his brother Howell of the situation in Georgia six weeks before the opening of the convention: "The effort on behalf of Douglas is daily more open and more energetic in this state." Another Cobb correspondent wrote from the state capitol: "The Columbus politicians, those who have pretended to be the Simon pure & Southern Rights men, are all Douglas men in Disguise [sic] in the late convention the disguise was so thin that it could easily be seen through, . . . they voted down all resolutions that would in any way prevent the Georgia Delegation from voting

<sup>26&</sup>quot;Letter of Albert Rust," December 24, 1859, Washington City, printed in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Arkansian, March 9, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>"Letter to the Editor," signed W. P. F., Memphis, Tenn., Appeal, December 2, 1858.

<sup>28</sup> March 31, 1860, Howell Cobb Manuscripts, University of Georgia Library, Athens, Ga. Hereafter citted as Cobb MSS.

for Mr Douglas. . . . They pretended to be fighting under the Banner of Mr. Stephens, but it meant Douglas all the time."29

A letter which was unusual in both its motive for support and its author came from the wife of a South Carolina congressman. "I am in favor of Dougles," Mrs. Sue Keitt asserted, "because southern men can rule him and get what they want—and then he is in favor of taking Cuba and all those other southern enterprises. The only way the South can save herself is to spread south, get new territory, enlarge herself, and spread her institutions and [then] cut loose from the North."<sup>30</sup>

some in the South who preferred a Southern candidate or even some other Northerner to Douglas, were, nevertheless prudent enough to refrain from repudiating Douglas altogether. Realizing that he might attain the nomination in spite of Southern and administration opposition, these men knew that outright rejection of Douglas prior to Charleston could only further divide the party and add to the strength of the Republicans in the North and of the "Opposition" in the South. Both Toombs and Stephens were among these moderates. Stephens, after saying that he preferred Hunter for the nomination, insisted, "Still if Douglas should be, [the nominee] I should support him most cordially if he does nothing worse than he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>S. I. Boughton to Howell Cobb, March 25, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

<sup>30</sup> Sue Sparks Keitt to her father, February 25, 1860, in Lawrence M. Keitt Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University.

has yet done."31

Toombs wrote to Stephens, "Douglas I think cannot weather the storm. . . . The great element of his weakness in the North is the hostility of the South to him." And on the eve of the convention Toombs added, "Douglas will be beaten, I think, with absolute certainty." But in closing Toombs reiterated, "I am quite sure he is stronger in the South than he will be with her representatives at Charleston." In a letter to another Georgian, however, Toombs remarked that, "If we go north Mr. Douglass [sic] must be the man, . . . he has excited so much hostility among the friends of the President in the non-slave-holding states that he has weakened himself greatly in all of these & made himself unavailable in the North as well as the South, but he is active & eager & may succeed." 32

A South Carolina congressman summed up his estimation of Southern feeling towards Douglas when he wrote to a member of the state legislature: "If we have to take Douglas, let it be with reluctance. It will I fear tear the South all to pieces. I can only support him in the event of a large portion

<sup>31</sup> Stephens to J. Henly Smith, February 24, 1860. In Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 463. Smith was a Washington newspaperman who was one of Stephens' most frequent correspondents and to whom Stephens often wrote confidential letters. The term "Opposition" was used in the South to designate the loosely structured party which had taken the place of the Whigs during the 1850's. During the 1860 campaign this group adopted the name Constitutional Union party.

March 16, April 20, 1860, Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 465, 468. Toombs to James Madison Spurlock, March 17, 1860, in James Madison Spurlock Collection. Georgia Department of Archives and History. Hereafter cited as Spurlock MSS.

of Southern States ratifying his nomination & as a choice between him & a Republican. Such is the feeling of the large majority of our conservative Southern men."33

Douglas' candidacy on any grounds. One wrote that as for the people of Alabama ". . . . If Douglas & disunion were presented to their choice, they would adopt the latter as the less evil."<sup>34</sup> And Howell Cobb insisted to his brother-in-law, "I don't think we ought under any circumstances to support Douglas—though it is hardly necessary to say so as he has no earthly chance for a nomination."<sup>35</sup> A female correspondent wrote cryptically to Attorney General Black about "the plan with regard to the Charleston Convention." She did not reveal details of the scheme except to say it was designed to be started "in the West to roll hitherwards & on through the country." From the contents of the letter it is obvious that the plan was meant to prevent Douglas' nomination at Charleston.<sup>36</sup>

A North Carolina Whig indicated the extent of anti-Douglas sentiment there when he declared: "Thousands of life long Democrats would as soon vote for Fred as Stephen Douglas--

<sup>33</sup> John D. Ashmore to Benjamin F. Perry, March 10, 1860, in Benjamin Perry Papers, Department of History and Archives, Montgomery, Alabama. Hereafter cited as Perry MSS.

Hugh Lawson Clay to Clement C. Clay, January 19, 1860, in Clement C. Clay Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University. Hereafter cited as Clay MSS. Clement C. Clay was a Senator from Alabama at this time.

<sup>35</sup> Cobb to John B. Lamar, April 8, 1860, Cobb MSS.

<sup>36</sup> Susan Leonard to Jeremiah Black, January 23, 1860, Black MSS.

yet he would be preferred to Banks, Seward, Corwin or any fanatical negro excitement candidate."<sup>37</sup> Another wrote pessimistically concerning the outcome of the election: "I have doubts about our success against that [Republican] party at the next election, and if we have to triumph with Douglas as a leader, success will be but little better than defeat."<sup>38</sup>

From various sections of the South came indications of the unpopularity of Douglas. From Maryland, Robert Hunter received a letter which stated: "The Douglas influence in this state is, I think, inconsiderable now." From Texas, Buchanan received a letter assessing the situation and concluding, "Douglas is nowhere in this quarter." From Alabama, Clay was told, "Douglas is Down, & so will be all his adherents." Summarizing the Southern feeling toward Douglas, a New Yorker wrote to the President: "I have just returned from the South where I have been for the last twelve months. . . . What nonsense it is in Northern papers to publish that Judge Douglas has a portion of the Democratic party in the South with him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Thomas K. Thomas to Henry E. Carey, December 8, 1859, in Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Paul Quattlebaum to James H. Hammond, April 18, 1860, in James Hammond Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as Hammond MSS. Hammond was Senator from South Carolina at this time.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Gwinn to Hunter, March 22, 1860 in Robert M.T. Hunter Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

<sup>40</sup> David Porter to Buchanan, January 17, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Williams to Clement C. Clay, December 5, 1859, Clay MSS.

I never met a southern gentleman for this last year who did not express his opposition to the 'Little Giant' and declare also that in the event of his nomination the whole South would refuse its vote to him."42

Newspapers in the South also gave evidence of Douglas' unpopularity although, except for the extreme journals which catered to the fire-eaters, most editors admitted to at least a grudging acceptance of Douglas' candidacy should he be the Charleston nominee. This stance was necessary lest the party lose all credibility in the event of a Douglas nomination. The difference between an editor's private feelings and the stance he felt he could take publicly was evident in a letter from William Old, editor of the Richmond, Virginia, Examiner, to Hunter. After saying that he believed Douglas' followers were trumping up votes illegally, Old confessed, "And if they are how can I get them presented to the public without making a direct attack upon Douglas which I will not do as I may have to support him, and do not wish to make his friends implacable."

Some editors, however, were less cautious in their condemnation of Douglas. The most extreme among Southern editors considered Douglas' candidacy as much objectionable as that of a "Black Republican" and said so openly in the months before the Charleston gathering. One said that the Republicans would not let them "into what they call their house, at all;

<sup>42</sup> Albert Ramsey to Buchanan, April 26, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup>April 5, 1860, <u>Hunter Correspondence</u>, 316.

while Mr. Douglas would invite us in, for the pleasure of afterwards kicking us out. By both are our blood-bought rights scorned and held at naught."

The Charleston, South Carolina, Mercury, which had been preaching disunion for a decade, quoted with approval a resolution adopted by a county Democratic meeting in Tennessee in preparation for the Charleston convention:

"We utterly repudiate and 'spit upon' the doctrine of unfriendly legislation to slavery . . . as advocated by Mr. Douglas . . . . That we would deplore his nomination at Charleston . . . that we will abide by the choice of our national Convention, except it be Stephen A. Douglas . . .

As the convention approached, attacks upon Douglas increased. One small Arkansas paper predicted "that ere the meeting of the Charleston Convention it will soon be found that a gentleman holding the views of Mr. Douglas has little more prospect of being accepted by the Democracy of the South as their candidate, than Mr. Seward himself." The repudiation of Douglas extended also to those who supported him. Again the Mercury led the way: "From the bottom of our hearts we regard, with a loathing, abhorrence and contempt, utterly inexpressible, the base, self-seeking and treacherous submissionists of the South."

False River, Louisiana, Point Coupe Democrat, March 3, 1860 as quoted in Reynolds, Editors Make War, 34.

<sup>45</sup> January 29, 1860, quoting the Memphis Avalanche.

Des Arc, Arkansas, Des Arc Citizen, March 21, 1860.

<sup>47</sup> As quoted in Baltimore, American and Commercial Advertiser, April 3, 1860.

The Nashville, <u>Union and American</u> went so far as to state that if "Douglas' nomination was necessary to the success of the party . . . we should prefer defeat, under our old banners, to a victory achieved by an ignominious desertion of them."

Other papers openly threatened to bolt the convention rather than support "any Northern National Douglas man for the Presidency." One such editorial concluded: "We need something more than a mere party man for the crisis, and such a man the South should insist upon at Charleston, or leave the Convention without participating in any of its deliberations."

The most serious threat was that of dissolution of the Union. On the eve of the convention the New York <u>Times</u> reported that Yancey would "oppose the nomination of Douglas in a four days speech." The article then went on to explain that "as the main ground of his opposition to the Senator from Illinois is because his election may prevent a dissolution of the Union, the Douglas men are willing that he shall go ahead." 50

Besides the opposition of the fire-eaters of the South,
Douglas was also attacked by friends of the Buchanan administration. The Washington correspondent of a Savannah paper reported
that: "The President does not forget that Douglas is a bolter,
and never loses an opportunity to send an arrow after him. He

As quoted in the Richmond, Virginia, Enquirer, September 30, 1859.

<sup>49</sup> Auburn, Alabama, Signal as quoted in the Richmond Enquirer, December 9, 1859.

Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, April 10, 1860 quoting the New York Times.

turns out of effice every man suspected of Douglasi[s]m. He has ordered that the officials at Baltimore, mere clerks, be dismissed, because they voted for Douglas delegates to the Charleston Convention." A letter defending Douglas appeared in the Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist and declared that: "Every trick, and scheme, that envenomed hostility and subtile [sic] ingenuity can conceive is resorted to . . . to insure his defeat in the Charleston convention." In assigning the blame for this campaign the writer continued, "They get their cue from Washington, the seat of political intrigue and profligacy, and the order is to leave no stone unturned to accomplish his destruction in the South." 52

Another method of attacking Douglas was that of accusing Douglas' followers of employing dishonest practices to assure his nomination. One paper asserted that, "Place & power & money, & every other conceivable bribe will be lavishly offered there [Charleston] to secure the nomination of Douglas." A correspondent of the Mercury found fault not only with those who openly advocated Douglas' candidacy, but also with anyone unwilling to reject totally the possibility of that candidacy. After a long tirade against this group the writer concluded: "Indeed

<sup>51</sup>Washington dispatch, March 14, in Savannah, Georgia, Daily Morning News, March 19, 1860.

<sup>52</sup> Letter written from Charleston, South Carolina, March 20, 1860 and printed in Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, March 23, 1860.

<sup>53</sup> Athens, Georgia, Southern Banner quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, April 6, 1860.

never were more cunning, unscrupulous and designing tricks resorted to by those hungry partisans to force Mr. Douglas down the throats of the people of the South."54

Another serious charge brought against the Douglas supporters was that of holding out promises to those desiring high positions. They were accused of promising Douglas' convention votes to a variety of presidential hopefuls should Douglas' nomination appear hopeless, and of promising the vice-presidency or a foreign mission to numerous men. One editorial decrying this abuse summarized its charges in numerical terms: "If every one of Mr. Douglas's promises to the end of securing the Charleston Convention's nomination be carried out, we shall have hereafter a Government with ten Presidents, forty vice-presidents, and besides, the depopulation of the country by and through the number of American ministers sent abroad to foreign courts."55

Another tactic used by the anti-Douglas forces in the weeks before the convention was that of accusing Douglas of being acceptable to the Republicans and therefore unsafe for the Democrats on any terms. Stories were circulated of Horace Greeley's support for Douglas in the 1858 senatorial contest as a means of enticing him to join the party. Rumors were spread of meetings between Douglas and Greeley at Douglas' residence in the capital. The New York <u>Tribune's</u> object was said to be to "secure the ascendancy of anti-slavery in the General

<sup>54</sup> Washington dispatch, January 26, In Charleston Mercury, January 30, 1860.

<sup>55</sup> Washington, D. C., Evening Star, March 3, 1860.

Government; and if it cannot get it there through the election of whoever the Chicago Convention may nominate, it is perfectly willing to get it there through the nomination of Douglas at Charleston, and the consequent abolitionizing of the Democratic party by its own act and deed."56

A Baltimore paper, however, had a different explanation for the favorable remarks of the Republican press concerning Douglas: "The friends of Mr. Seward are also engaged in the effort to prevent the nomination of Mr. Douglas, foreseeing that his nomination at Charleston will destroy the availability of their favorite at Chicago. Their open denunciation or opposition would benefit Mr. Douglas, hence they profess to favor his nomination, and by claiming him as a Republican in principle, hope to . . . increase the Southern opposition to his nomination."<sup>57</sup>

This view was expressed in another version in a Northern, pro-Douglas paper which reported an interview with "an intelligent Republican-more frank than the generality of his party."

This man was reported to have said that, "While he would not concede that Mr. Douglas would certainly be elected, . . . it was idle to disguise the fact that the Republicans feared him as they feared no other man." 58

<sup>56</sup> Washington, D. C., Evening Star, April 19, 1860.

<sup>57</sup>Baltimore, Maryland, American and Commercial Advertiser, April 11, 1860.

<sup>58</sup> Cleveland, Ohio, Plain Dealer, April 21, 1860.

The struggle for and against Douglas did not even escape the halls of Congress. One example occurred on March 14, 1860, when Congressman Jabez Curry of Alabama in a speech in the House "pleaded the utter impossibility of the consent of the South to the nomination of Mr. Douglas." A Savannah paper reporting this speech concluded: "Southern men think it is high time to put an end to this thing; and they intend . . . in the proceedings of Congress, to set the Northern friends of Mr. Douglas right, and to convince them, if possible, of the inflexible hostility of the Southern democracy to the recognition of his name or his platform at the Charleston Convention." 59

The foregoing may seem to indicate solid opposition in the South to the candidacy of Douglas, but there were two groups who favored his nomination. The first consisted of those who believed Douglas the most deserving and the most capable in the Democratic party; the second had reservations about Douglas' political doctrines but thought him the only Democrat who could possibly win the election over the Republican candidate.

The loyalty of the first group was described in an editorial in one Southern paper in the following way: "His [Douglas' supporters] are positive in word and action, tenacious enthusiastic and laborious; and if they don't succeed in nominating their favorite, it will be no fault of theirs." The Southern newspapers who subscribed to this complete support of

<sup>59</sup> Savannah, Georgia, Daily Morning News, March 22, 1860.

<sup>60</sup> Fayetteville, Arkansas, The Arkansian, March 23, 1860.

Douglas in the pre-convention period were in the minority, but some were among the most influential papers such as the Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist and the Mobile, Alabama, Register. The former wrote that with Douglas' nomination and election "Black Republicanism [would receive] a back set that it would not rally from for years." But the Georgia journal warned that should the Democrats nominate a sectional candidate, "it is very certain that a Black Republican victory will sweep unbroken over the North." 61

The New Orleans <u>Bee</u> was representative of the many papers which had some reservations about Douglas' candidacy but nevertheless admitted to the reasonableness of his nomination. Several weeks before the Charleston meeting a lengthy editorial summarized the chances of the various candidates and concluded that, "The advantage of his [Douglas'] position consists in this, that his friends present a solid and compact array, representing nearly, if not quite one-half the States, while the delegates who are opposed to him fritter away their preferences on a dozen candidates." 62

The <u>Bee</u> also clearly pointed out the inconsistency with which Southern Democrats who opposed Douglas' nomination were acting. One of its forthright editorials declared:

The truth is that it is precisely because the soberminded portion of the South behold in the career of Douglas the most satisfactory evidence of his patriotism, nationality and disinterestedness, as well as of his

<sup>61</sup> April 11, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup>February 29, 1860.

transcendent ability that his ultra Southern opponents conceive it indispensable to keep up a perpetual shrieking chorus of imprecations, denouncing him in one breath as a most dangerous enemy to the South, and deriding him in the next, as absolutely destitute of the slightest chance of the Charleston nomination.

The same editorial again pointed out the difference between the leaders and the people, "A very considerable proportion of Southern citizens are disposed to place implicit confidence in Douglas, and will not only support him heartily, if a candidate, but ardently desire his nomination."

It was in these months just before the Charleston meeting that each state held a convention to elect its delegates, and propose resolutions for the guidance of the national convention. A study of the actions of the leading Southern state conventions gives important clues to the policies their delegations would follow in Charleston. Though there were similarities between some groups, still each delegation had its unique characteristics. Since the Alabama delegation was of pivotal importance, its background will be examined first.

The Democratic party in Alabama had two distinct factions: the one led by Yancey demanded congressional protection for slavery in the territories. This group totally rejected the notion of popular sovereignty as interpreted by Douglas and thus rejected Douglas as the nominee of the party. The demand for protection of slavery was not new in Alabama politics: it

<sup>63&</sup>lt;sub>March 28, 1860.</sub>

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

cratic convention at Baltimore in 1848, when under Yancey's leadership that state's delegation had presented the same demand but had been denied a hearing and had seceded from the convention. The Yancey platform of 1848 was adopted again in 1860 with certain additional points, such as an endorsement of the Dred Scott decision as upholding the idea of congressional protection and the imposition of the unit rule on the delegation. While no mention was made in the official statement of a refusal to accept Douglas as the nominee, such an intention was implied inasmuch as the framers of the resolutions knew that he would never consent to their demands.

The moderate element of the Democratic party in Alabama was represented by John J. Seibels and John Forsyth, editors of two of the state's leading newspapers, and by former governor John Winston. They preferred the national Cincinnati platform of 1856 with its general statement of popular sovereignty and were supporters of Douglas. 65

Yancey had hoped for the collaboration of South Carolina in putting the demands of the South before the Charleston delegates, but in this he was disappointed. After the John Brown raid on Harper's Ferry in October, 1859, South Carolina had proposed a joint Southern convention but when this plan met with negative response the Union men temporarily enjoyed the upper

<sup>65</sup> James L. Murphy, "Alabama and the Charleston Convention of 1860," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, V (Montgomery, Ala., 1904), 239-247.

hand in state politics, and there was a lessening of enthusiasm for plans of disunion. Rhett waged an almost single-handed campaign, first for the boycotting of the Charleston meeting, and, failing that, for joint action with the Alabama delegation. Events proved that Rhett had moved too fast.

The radicals did stay away from the convention, officially at least, and the South Carolina delegation which attended was made up of national Democrats who favored the preservation of the Union and supported the nomination of Douglas while hoping that James L. Orr who headed their delegation might become the vice-presidential nominee. These Unionists delegates went to Charleston uninstructed as to either platform or nominee, but since they exerted little leadership their influence on the total convention was negligible. 66

Virginia's situation was colored by the ambitions of Robert Hunter, a states' rights senator, and of former governor Henry Wise, both of whom hoped for a presidential nomination resulting from a deadlocked convention. The delegation went to the convention uninstructed as to candidate and inclined to reaffirm the Cincinnati platform. Because of the state's location between north and south and its proximity to the nation's capital, Virginians were not eager for secession, for they realized that their state would most likely become a

<sup>66</sup> Laura White, Robert Barnwell Rhett: Father of Secession (New York, 1931), 156-162; Ollinger Crenshaw, Slave States in the Presidential Election of 1860 (Baltimore, 1945), 198-207. Hereafter cited as Crenshaw, Slave States.

battlefield between sections.67

North Carolina, while it had some states' rights advocates, did not have a leading extremist as South Carolina and Alabama had. Most of its delegates were moderates and some were to play important roles in the convention. Both the radicals, led by I. W. Avery who was to become chairman of the platform committee at Charleston, and the conservatives, led by William W. Holden, the editor of the North Carolina Standard. were willing to stand upon the Cincinnati platform. While they were not instructed against Douglas' nomination, neither was there very strong support for him among the delegates. ON recalling his position at the time of the convention. Holden wrote in his Memoirs: "I was jealous for the so-called rights of the South on the question of slavery, and greatly concerned at the apparently impending election of a sectional candidate for the Presidency. But I was not a Secessionist nor a Revolutionist. I was strongly attached to the union of the states, and felt myself to be a national man. "69

The situation in Georgia was complicated by the various positions of its several nationally known politicians. Howell Cobb, the Secretary of the Treasury and one of Douglas' most inveterate enemies, wanted the party's nomination. His supporters in the state legislature called a state convention

<sup>67</sup> Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 321.

<sup>68</sup> Joseph Sitterson, The Secession Movement in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1939), 162-164.

<sup>69</sup> Memoirs of W. W. Holden (Durham, N.C., 1911), 10.

earlier than the appointed time and instructed its delegates to support the usual Southern demands and to recommend Cobb for the nomination. Because the actions of this convention were very unpopular, the state's Democratic committee ordered another convention. This time the slate of delegates was a combination of Cobb and anti-Cobb delegates, and because it was twice the normal size for the delegation it had the unit rule imposed. The recommendation of Cobb for president was withdrawn due to the influence of Governor Joseph Brown who chose to side with Alexander H. Stephens. 70

Mississippi was another leader in both the number and intensity of its extremist-type Democrats. Jefferson Davis was the controller of this group, although he was not the most extreme. His interest was divided between upholding Southern rights and joining the administration fight to defeat Douglas. The state's two senators, Davis and Albert G. Brown, the governor John Pettus, and David Glenn, the leader of the state's delegation to Charleston all shared ultra states' rights views and rejected Douglas as the nominee of the party. Democratic newspapers strongly supported the Ultras' view and when the time came to choose and instruct delegates to the national convention, The Mississippian called for "a sound platform and a reliable candidate or none," and declared that Mississippi "will not support Douglas on any platform."71

<sup>70</sup> Montgomery, Cracker Parties, 236-238.

<sup>71</sup> March 21, 1860, as quoted in Percy Rainwater, Mississippi: Storm Center of Secession (Baton Rouge, La., 1938), 118. Hereafter cited as Rainwater, Mississippi.

Louisiana politics, like that of Alabama and Georgia, was characterized by factions. The one controlled by Senator John Slidell gained control of the Charleston delegation and called for a platform supporting congressional protection of slavery. It pledged itself to consult with other Southern states if a Republican should be elected in November, endorsed Slidell for the nomination and bound itself to the unit rule to insure itself against deserters to the Douglas camp. The moderates of the state, under the leadership of Senator Pierre Soule, were outmaneuvered in the composition of the original delegation but later went to the Baltimore convention and supported Douglas. 72

Under the shadow of factionalism on the state level then, preparation for the national convention got under way. Just before the Charleston meeting began, a correspondent of the New York Times wrote from Mobile, Alabama, summarizing the situation in the South as he saw it. After giving an account of the strength of various favorites in each of the slave states, he concluded that the opposition to Douglas was too scattered, that the consequences of his rejection too grave, and thus that his nomination was "inevitable." Estimating the abilities of the delegates he concluded that: "It is impossible to conceive of that degree of fatuity in a body, composed as the Charleston Convention is to be, necessary to the selection of a standard

<sup>72</sup> Mary McLure, "Elections of 1860 in Louisiana,"
Louisiana Historical Quarterly, IX (October, 1926), 648-649.
Hereafter cited as McLure, "Louisiana."

bearer who must enter upon the campaign foredoomed to defeat."73

The same writer predicted that the Northern Democrats would let it be known that, while they would support whomever the Southerners chose, they could guarantee Northern votes only for Douglas and that the responsibility for any other nomination would rest with the Southerners and that the result would be the election of Seward. "If the Southern men are made to understand that they must have Douglas or Seward," he concluded, "no member of the Charleston Convention can stand up before his people, if he refuses to accept the Senator from Illinois." 74

Though this estimate of the responsibleness of the delegates proved erroneous, it helps explain the optimism with which Douglas' supporters both Northern and Southern entered the convention. Not until many months later, just before the November election, did Douglas' supporters realize the hopelessness of their cause. Until then, however, they fought doggedly to gain first the nomination, then the presidency for their favorite.

Thus it was that, on the eve of the Charleston convention feelings ran high on all sides. Each group, the Douglas men, the administration clique, and the fire-eaters, felt that it enjoyed the support needed to accomplish its goals. Each thought that its ideas would prevail. Each was determined to carry the day when the convention opened. And as the day

<sup>73</sup>April 7, 1860.

<sup>74&</sup>lt;sub>Ib1d</sub>.

approached the chances for compromise became more remote and the chances for the final rupture of the last national party more immediate. As in every election year, many of the crucial decisions had been made long before the delegates gathered in Charleston and the gavel of the chairman called the convention to order.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE CHARLESTON CONVENTION: MICROCOSM OF SECTIONALISM

Since the convention system for nominating presidential candidates began in the United States almost 150 years ago, every four years delegates, politicians, reporters, and hangers-on have gathered in an appointed place and carried out the rituals leading to a presidential nomination. These conventions are characterized by speech-making, dire threats, rumors, and political wheeling and dealing. And though the parties publish officials proceedings, the most important decisions and declarations are often arrived at far from center stage and in unofficial, private meetings. In most cases, therefore, the proceedings simply ratify and make official arrangements which have been made earlier. In this 1860 was no exception, but rather a prime example.

Fully a month before the Democratic convention was to open in Charleston, South Carolina, delegates began gathering in the national capital "to consult with the leading Democratic party men in public life from different sections of the country as to the best nominations that can be made, ere making up their

minds as to the course to be pursued by themselves in the discharge of their duties." Newspapers were filled with accounts of the arrival in Washington of delegates and hordes of others who came to attempt to influence the outcome of the convention. Two weeks before the opening of the Charleston meeting a New York Herald correspondent wrote from the capital that "the Presidential cauldron is boiling, & scarcely a day passes that does not change the fortunes of those who are most prominent for the nomination at Charleston." From that point on, the convention became a major topic in newspaper columns throughout the country. Most papers had taken sides in the nomination battle, announcing the success of favored candidates as a certainty and alleging despair in the camps of rivals. Rumors were circulated freely, especially those charging rival factions with unscrupulous practices.

The Douglas delegates gathered at the National Hotel to consult with the "Little Giant" and his manager, William Richardson, congressman from Illinois. As reported by a staunch Douglas supporter, this gathering place clearly foreshadowed the outcome of the convention. "It is as plainly evident here, and we may say more so than elsewhere, that the great heart of this great country, North and South, East and West, is for Douglas." The writer minimized the anti-Douglas forces and asserted: "The only opposition to him on any account . . . is

Washington, D.C., Evening Star, March 23, 1860.

New York <u>Herald</u> as quoted in the Augusta, Georgia, <u>Chronicle and Sentinel</u>, April 10, 1860.

that which has been set on foot by Mr. Buchanan, backed by the fire-eaters and political aspirants of the South."3

The foes of Douglas' nomination interpreted the same scene quite differently. One unfriendly version of the Douglas meeting place read: "The Douglas men have a branch establishment at the National Hotel, the star of which is the 'Little Giant' himself. Everybody is invited in there, on the principle of 'Come into my parlor.' Some go in and some don't. Tonight there was a jolly time at the ranch, and speeches were made by Senators and Representatives. Whiskey was drunk, and stories told, but nobody in particular committed, unless verdant gentlemen of the press were induced to believe that everybody who spoke there would shout for Douglas at Charleston. Not a bit of it. Good whiskey drinkers are not caught that way."

On both sides accusations of bribery and dishonest practices were heaped upon opponents. A Baltimore paper said that "the President and Messrs. Slidell and Lane, will consent to anything to accomplish [the defeat of Douglas]." More specifically, the New York Times reported Slidell's leaving for Charleston "to open an office for trafficking in human flesh." It was rumored that he was ready to pay \$1,000 cash and more for votes against Douglas. The report went on to say that if all else failed, "the Charleston Mercury is to announce the sudden

Washington dispatch, April 14, in Cleveland, Ohio, Plain Dealer, April 18, 1860.

Baltimore, Maryland, American and Commercial Advertiser, April 18, 1860.

reappearance of the yellow fever, and thus drive off Northern delegates."5

The anti-Douglas forces were equally apt at promoting tales of evil-doing by their opponents. An editorial in the Mercury stated that: "The entire efforts of Squatterdom, . . . is to blast the prospects of those who are now regarded in the Seuth as true men. They would taint by foul contact—engender feud through suspicion—innoculate disease and corruption by inferences, and in every manner profess friendship, while they weave their web to entangle." The Washington Evening Star, answering the rumors of Slidell's buying of votes, asserted that such slanders "have already done Douglas far more harm than good, as Mr. Slidell's personal friends in the different delegations are very numerous and very indignant at them."

A week before the convention opened a reporter for the New York <u>Herald</u> forecast clearly what the tone of the Charleston gathering would be when he observed:

Democratic faction has killed everything in the Democratic party except the mechanical movement of party drill. This is going to bring together in National Convention, perhaps for the last time forevermore, the advocate of squatter sovereignty and of strict construction, the ultra proslavery men of the South, and those with freesoil proclivities from the North . . . the Buchanan conservatives, the Douglas temporizers, the Hunter exclusives, . . . and a host of self-worshippers, who look upon the government

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., April 23, 1860; New York Times, April 18, 1860. Joseph Lane was a Senator from Oregon who, it was rumored, hoped for a vice-presidential bid from the Southerners:

Washington dispatch in Charleston Mercury, April 3, 1860; Charleston dispatch, April 22, in Washington Evening Star April 24, 1860.

as something to be administered for their own personal and peculiar benefit. 7

How accurate this picture of the party representatives was became more apparent as the delegates gathered in Charleston. Among the delegates and spectators four factions could be distinguished. The most numerous were these who favored Douglas! nomination with a reaffirmation of the Cincinnati Platform of 1856. This group formed a simple majority of the delegates but could not command the two-thirds vote necessary for the nomination. Not every delegate in this category, however, was equally devoted to the cause of Douglas. Degrees of devotion ranged from those, like William Richardson, Douglas' manager and J. W. Gray, editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, who would hear of no other nominee though willing to make some concession to the Southern faction on the question of platform, to those who thought Douglas the most available candidate and the only one able to defeat the Republicans, but one who might be bought off for another candidate by bribes or promises of patronage.

A second faction was composed of those known as "fire-eaters," a group dedicated to the protection of Southern rights at all costs, even disunion. This group was led by William L. Yancey, head of the Alabama delegation who was described in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>New York <u>Herald</u>, quoted in Auguste, Georgia, <u>Chronicle</u> and <u>Sentinel</u>, April 17, 1860.

<sup>8</sup>Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 326; Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, 300-302. The die-hard supporters of Douglas called themselves "Adamantines." Washington dispatch, April 19, in Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 23, 1860. There were no Southerners to be found among the Adamantines.

Murat Halstead's detailed accounts of the 1860 conventions as "the prince of the fire-eaters." On Yancey's arrival in Charleston, Halstead commented: "The streng point made against him by the Douglasites is that he is a disunionist." But he continued, "It will not frighten him nor his Southern friends, however, to apply that epithet to him. I very much doubt whether the Douglas men have a leader competent to cope with him in the coming fight. . . . The South will have the intellect and the pluck to make its points."

The third group was less geographical in orientation and consisted of President Buchanan's followers who were more interested in defeating Douglas than in a particular candidate or platform. The leader of this group was John Slidell who when he arrived in Charleston, Halstead called "a matchless wire-worker" and forecast that "his appearance here means war to the knife." Though Slidell was from Louisiana, most members

Murat Halstead, Three Against Lincoln: Murat Halstead Reports the Caucuses of 1860 (Baton Rouge, 1960), 8. After the rupture each wing of the party issued Proceedings. The one published by the Douglas wing was Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention Held in 1860 (Cleveland, 1860). Hereafter cited as Proceedings [Douglas]. The one published by the Breckenridge wing was Proceedings of the Conventions at Charleston and Baltimore (Washington, 1860). Hereafter cited as Proceedings [Breckenridge]. For the most part the Halstead version has been used in this paper. It is the only one containing editorializing on events in and out of the convention hall. None of the accounts contains a verbatim transcription of all the proceedings and each one contains details not included in either of the other two.

<sup>10</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 10. A correspondent of the New York Times at Charleston corroborated this view when he wrote: "The arrival of John Slidell put cold water on the Douglas movement." April 23, 1860. A correspondent of the Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser wrote from

of the administration faction were from the North especially Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New York and were motivated by a variety of reasons such as interest in patronage, jealousy of Douglas' popularity, and among the Easterners, a feeling of being threatened by the rising power of the Western members of the party.

The fourth group was the least well-organized, consisting of moderate Southerners who rejected Yancey's fire-eating
philosophy but who also had reservations about the nomination
of Douglas. -Some examples of this group were John A. Winston,
former governor of Alabama and a rival of Yancey's for political
leadership of the state, and Benjamin Perry, a unionist and
state legislator of South Carolina. This group, along with the
weaker members of the Douglas camp, and some in the administration group, became the objects of much wooing by rival factions,
for largely on their decisions would the final outcome of the
convention depend.

At the opening of the convention a number of candidates were in the field; Douglas was admittedly the strongest. Following him were Senators Robert Hunter of Virginia, James Guthrie of Kentucky, John Dickinson of New York, Joseph Lane of Oregon, and Vice-President John Breckenridge of Kentucky. Jefferson Davis was also considered strong until he sent a letter with Slidell withdrawing his name before the opening of the

Charleston: "It is said the Administration has become alarmed at the prospects of Mr. Douglas, and Messrs. Slidell and Bright have been sent here to defeat him at any sacrifice." Charleston dispatch, April 20, 1860 in April 23, 1860 issue.

convention. Douglas' chances hinged partly on whether or not his foes could unite on one of these other men. On the eve of the convention a caucus of Southern delegates was held but agreement on a candidate could not be reached and party harmony seemed as far off as ever. A reporter from an "Opposition" paper writing from Charleston three days before the opening of the convention observed: "Strenuous efforts are making to consolidate the South, but unsuccessfully as yet. If such a combination be formed before the Convention organizes, Mr. Douglas-will be beaten. That is the turning point of the whole contest. Southern divisions have the effect of increasing his strength." 12

The one factor which strengthened the chance of the nomination of one of the rivals of Douglas was the threat of both Southern Ultras and of administration forces that they would absolutely not have Douglas as the nominee under any circumstances. The New York Herald stated that before the opening of the convention "the delegations of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, with portions of those of Illinois and Indiana, are already organized for a revolt in the event of Douglas being nominated." In response the Douglasites threatened that if the platform were "too hot

<sup>11</sup> Charleston dispatch, April 22, in Washington Evening Star, April 24, 1860.

<sup>12</sup>Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, April 23, 1860.

<sup>13</sup> New York Herald, as quoted in Charleston Mercury, April 24, 1860.

to hold him [Douglas] . . . then, under instruction, some friend of Mr. Douglas in the Convention will rise and withdraw his name as a candidate. The spokesman for Mr. Douglas having done this, will next take up his hat, walk out, and he will be followed by every follower of the Little Giant. \*14\*

Summing up public uncertainty of the results of the convention, one reporter declared: "But in this generation, we are accustomed to strange sights among politicians, and we have made up our mind not to be surprised at anything that happens at Charleston next week."

One other factor which was certain to influence the convention, yet one which was beyond the control of any politician, was its location in Charleston, South Carolina, the psychological heart of Southern sectionalism and a center of Southern extremism. This site had been chosen at the close of the 1856 convention and at that time was considered by Douglas supporters to be advantageous to the "Little Giant's" cause since he was then the favorite candidate of the South. By 1860, however, after the Lecompton fight and the senunciation of the Freeport Doctrine, Southern sentiment had turned against Douglas, and Charleston was by then the last place the Douglasites would have chosen. After the press spread rumors that exorbitant prices would be charged by Charleston hotel-keepers, there was even an unsuccessful attempt to have the convention site moved to

<sup>14</sup> Washington dispatch, April 19, in Savannah <u>Daily</u> Morning News, April 27, 1860.

<sup>15</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, April 20, 1860.

Baltimore.16

Besides those delegates chosen by state conventions to represent them at the Charleston meeting, numerous other people came for various reasons though with no official function. Douglasites called those who came to support their cause "consulting delegations." About three-fourths of all those who came from a distance without official responsibilities belonged to this group, according to one reporter. But he noted that "they have up-hill work of it--the Southern men now in attendance invariably looking wall-eyed at them when any one of them undertakes to 'crack' the Little Giant 'up' in their hearing."17 Another pressure group was composed of residents of Charleston and the surrounding areas. They were accused of being exponents of "Southern extremism . . . carried in the galleries to the indecent extreme of hissing when anything occurred antagonistic to its wishes." The sole South Carolina editor who supported Douglas gave his estimate of this group: "Of course, no one regards this pressure; for 1t is known to be made up, in the main of youth and inexperience instigated by crude ideas of Southern rights and bred by an impulsive patriotism which owes its vim in many cases to bad whiskey."18

<sup>16</sup> Pickens, South Carolina, Courier as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, April 1, 1860.

<sup>17</sup>Charleston dispatch, April 19, in Washington Evening Star, April 23, 1860.

<sup>18</sup> Charleston dispatch, April 20, in Edgefield, South Carolina, Advertiser, May 2, 1860.

In any event Halstead's summation of the tenor of the Charleston meeting seems to have been correct when he stated that: "The Honorable Stephen A. Douglas was the pivot individual of the Charleston Convention. Every delegate was for or against him. Every motion meant to nominate or not to nominate him. Every parliamentary war was pro or con Douglas." 19

The day the convention opened at Institute Hall, April 23, dawned hot and sultry and as the temperature rose above ninety degrees even the weather seemed unfavorable to the harmonious working together of the various factions. By noon delegates, reporters, and outsiders had gathered for the formal call to order of the Democratic convention. The opening gavel signaled that the time had arrived for the party to cope with the questions which had been dividing it for the past four years. Finally the formalities which were supposed to lead to at least superficial unity got underway on schedule. One reporter remarked that the delegates seemed to "feel as if they were going into a battle."

On the first day the Douglas forces gained a minor victory in the selection of one of their number, T. B. Flourney of Arkansas, as President <u>pro tem</u>. But this action was termed, "a tub thrown to the Douglas whale--a bait to keep them quiet while their candidate is being knocked in the head," 21 and was

<sup>19</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Charleston <u>Mercury</u>, April 21, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Charleston dispatch, April 23, in Washington <u>Evening</u> Star, April 28, 1860.

offset on the second day when Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts, a Southern sympathizer, was elected permanent chairman. As an anti-Douglas newspaper reported, "This selection is a death-blow to Douglas' hopes, if the wishes of the majority of the delegates are any indication of the nominee."

Contrary to usual party practice a motion was proposed calling for the adoption of the platform prior to the nomination of the presidential candidate. This motion was sponsored by the ultra-Southerners in the hope that they could obtain a platform on which Douglas would refuse to stand. Surprisingly, Douglas' followers voted for the motion, though some had reservations about the plan. Those Douglasites who favored the motion thought that if a platform unacceptable to the ultras were adopted, some of them, according to their threats, would withdraw from the convention and make Douglas' nomination that much easier. With the two major factions united on the measure it was easily adopted.

Another Douglas victory on the first day was the decision of the executive committee, confirmed by a vote of the convention, concerning the admission of delegations from Illinois and New York. From each of these states, besides the regularly elected delegations, both of which were known to favor Douglas' nomination, there was an anti-Douglas delegation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Des Arc, Arkansas, <u>Citizen</u>, April 28, 1860; Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Charles A. Stuart to Douglas, April 24, 1860, Douglas MSS.

claiming to be the legitimate representatives of the Democratic party in their state. The Illinois delegation was led by Ike Cook, the Chicago postmaster who had been charged by Buchanan two years earlier with the task of defeating Douglas in the 1858 senatorial election. The contesting New Mork delegation was led by New York City's mayor Fernando Wood and was composed of those "hard" Democrats who refused to accept the decisions of the regular state convention which had elected a slate of delegates representing both the "hard" and the "soft" wings of the state party, but which was controlled by the softs. Both the Cook and the Wood delegations were denied any seats in the convention and thus Douglas was assured the solid votes of both Illinois and New York, since both states were bound by instructions of their state conventions to vote as units. 24

On the first evening of the convention the Southerners realized that their cause had been weakened and that should the tide continue as it had begun Douglas' nomination was inevitable. A caucus of Southern delegates was held in which it was agreed to demand that the senatorial resolutions calling for protection of slavery in the territories be incorporated into the platform and that the Southern delegates should withdraw if their demands were not met. Contrary rumors circulated claiming that if such

<sup>24</sup> Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, April 23, 1860; Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 20-22. For background on Ike Cook and his position in Illinois Democratic politics see Nichols, Disruption of American Democracy, 216-219; on Wood and the split in New York state see Ibid., 30-36, 93-96; also Milledge Bonham, Jr., "New York and the Election of 1860," New York History, XV (April, 1934), 124-131.

Southern demands were met, the Douglas forces would withdraw.

Animosity on both sides was so great that Halsted reported:

"There is an impression prevalent this morning that the Convention is destined to explode in a grand row."

25

Southern prospects did not improve the second day as the Douglas forces gained still another victory. The convention rules were amended to allow delegates in unistructed delegations to case separate votes. This freed about twenty-five Douglas votes in uninstructed delegations and silenced some anti-Douglas votes in delegations bound by the unit rule. According to one reporter, "This proved the cockatrice egg out of which the death of the party has at length been hatched." 26

After these two days of preliminary business, the committee to draft the platform was appointed and other convention business came to a virtual standstill. As each day passed and the committee was still unable to report to the convention, tensions grew and the impression soon prevailed that not even token harmony could be reached. During the remainder of the week delegates and others were busy keeping the principals in Washington informed not only of the proceedings at Institute will but also of the temper of the various groups. Halstead reported that by the second day the pressure in the galleries and on the streets was for Douglas. Nevertheless, two of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Augusta, Georgia, <u>Chronicle and Sentinel</u>, April 26, 1860; Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Washington Evening Star, June 23, 1860; Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 31.

Douglas' supporters who wrote to him during this period commented that this pressure was decidedly against him. One observer assured Douglas that "while this pressure will retard the progress of your friends, it will not nor cannot defeat your nomination."

Messages to Buchanan gave the opposite interpretation. A Pennsylvania delegate assured the President, "Our friends are tonight in good spirits—they anticipate with confidence a good platform & the defeat of Douglas. . . . I have seen enough to know that the feeling of the South to Douglass [sic] is one of implacable hostility & his nomination would produce an alienation."

Douglas' mercurial friend, George Sanders, feeling confident of Douglas' nomination counseled Buchanan that "Douglas' example at Cincinnati by which alone you could have been nominated should be followed by every competitor. I rely on your patriotism and generosity—send for Douglas as soon as the telegraph announce [sic] to you that he has a decided majority of the convention and offer him your support and all will be well."

Speculation, however, did not lead to a nomination.

And finally on Friday, April 27, the fifth day of the convention,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 31; C. P. Culver to Douglas, April 28, 1860, Douglas MSS; Samuel Hammond to Douglas, April 27, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Henry Phillips to Buchanan, April 26, 1860, Buchanan. MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Sanders to Buchanan, April 27, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

the platform committee was ready to report to the assembled delegates. A majority report demanded Congressional protection of slavery in the territories, a minority platform of the Douglas faction re-affirmed the platform of 1856 with the additional resolution that the party would abide by decisions of the Supreme Court on territorial questions, and a compromise platform called for the Cincinnati platform without further change. Triday and Saturday were spent in discussion of the platforms and the proposal of amendments.

On Friday evening Yancey gave his long-awaited speech in the convention. By consent of the delegates he was granted more time than usual and addressed the convention for an hour and a half. He clearly told the North that the South would not "bear any longer any doubt as regards what is the position of this party on this great issue [slavery in the territories]." He exhorted Southerners that they "must accept defeat upon great truths with cheerfulness, rather than rejoice in a victory obtained upon error or double dealing." Yancey's speech was answered by one from George Pugh, the Ohio Senator who was one of Douglas' staunchest defenders. Pugh pointed out that the Alabama delegation had asked for the same platform resolution in 1856 but that then they had not demanded it at the cost of

Malstead, Three Against Lincoln, 46-48. In committee each state had one vote, thus the Administration-Southern coalition had the majority. On the floor, however, each state had the same number of votes as in the electoral college and there the Douglas forces had the majority.

<sup>31</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 77.

breaking up the party. He urged that such a demand would surely cost the party its Northern support. He accused the South of telling the North "they must put their hands on their mouths and their mouths in the dust." But he warned, "Gentlemen of the South, you mistake us--.. we will not do it." A Douglas supporter assured the Little Giant that, "Senator Pugh's speech... in reply to Mr. Yancey of Ala. [sic] produced a profound sensation, & is highly spoken of by the most radical men of the South."

Upon the completion of the speeches a delegate from Connecticut asked for a vote upon the question of the platform. On hearing this the delegates and spectators broke out in a loud commotion, some wishing to have further discussion, others wishing to vote, still others wishing to adjourn. Halstead graphically described the scene:

In an instant the House was in an uproar—a hundred delegates upon the floor, and upon chairs, screaming like panthers, and gesticulating like monkeys. The president, for the first time, completely lost control over the Convention; not a word was audible. The reporters climbed upon their tables, the delegates mounted the chairs, the people in the galleries stretched their necks and hung over the balustrade, and literally! . . . 'you would see the Speaker's hammer going, but could not hear it.'<sup>34</sup>

When order was finally restored the Chairman accepted a motion for adjournment which passed by a close vote. It was recognized that to vote on the platform "in the midst of such a

<sup>32</sup>Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 54; Proceedings [Douglas], 79-86.

<sup>33</sup>c. P. Culver to Douglas, April 28, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>34</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 55-56.

tornado . . . would be certain to blow up the Convention."<sup>35</sup>
The delegates separated in a bad humor and everyone expected
"the crisis" in the morning. But the Saturday session passed
with another interminable series of resolutions and amendments,
and when it adjourned at eleven that evening neither agreement
nor disruption had occurred.

Sunday was officially a day of rest from convention labors, but in reality it was perhaps the busiest day since the beginning. On both sides there was much haggling over positions, promising of offices and favors, and wheedling or delegates who were not solidly in any camp. According to a Douglas man the bribery of the Northerners who followed Slidell's lead combined "with the political clanishness in the South makes a combination that no man on earth could beat but DOUGLAS." Halstead, however, thought that Douglas' stock was weaker than earlier in the week, and that if the South would only remain in the convention his nomination was impossible. He calculated that 130 votes were immovably against Douglas and that it would therefore be impossible for Douglas ever to receive the two-thirds majority necessary for a nomination. 37

It was at this juncture that Halstead retracted the statement he had made earlier that the Southerners had the advantage in brains and tactics. The first week, he now

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup>Charleston dispatch, April 30, in Cleveland <u>Plain</u> <u>Dealer</u>, May 4, 1860.

<sup>37</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 64.

believed, had witnessed far more skill on the part of the Douglas leaders. This advantage was attributed to the charismatic quality of the Little Giant and the inspiration he had stirred in his supporters when they visited him in Washington on their way to Charleston. Halstead's view of the Southerners, with the exception of Yancey, was now at the opposite end of the spectrum: "There have been a considerable number of displays of the worst sort of Southern blatherskiteism, and some notable instances of Southern ill-manners." 38

In contrasting the opposing forces Halstead commented that: "The Douglas men came here with a regular program, with a powerful mass of instructed delegates, and an enthusiastic corps of outsiders. The South and the Administration forces came without a candidate, a program, or even a conceit of a policy. They have rested secure in the idea of their strength . . . . It is very evident here tonight that, with the Federal Government and the dominant men of the section of the greatest strength of the Democratic party against him, [Douglas] is, in generalship, more than a match for them all." 39

Apparently many Southerners began to have second thoughts about their threatened withdrawal from the convention. They began to see that this would make Douglas' nomination inevitable and give it the appearance of being that of the national Democratic party. Late on Sunday evening Southerners

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>39</sup> Thid.

caucused once again and Yancey was convinced that the Alabama delegation should disregard instructions and remain in convention even when the minority or Douglas platform was adopted. According to a Louisiana delegate, who was an eyewitness to this caucusing, Yancey agreed to the plan. He was, however, unable to get the majority of his delegation to accept it. Ironically, John Winston, Yancey's rival in the delegation and the one who had originally fought the state convention's instructions concerning withdrawal, now refused to disobey instructions and was joined by a majority of other Alabama delegates. 40

When the convention resumed on Monday, it was the last day of even superficial unity in the Democratic party. The minority report of the Douglas faction was adopted by a vote of 165 to 138. The vote reflected the large divisions in the convention. Every deep-South state along with California and Oregon voted against it; every Northern state voting as a unit voted for the platform; the border states as well as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New Jersey divided their votes. These last three states contained many supporters of the Administration. On these states, which were free to divide their vote, many motions depended for passage, and it was these delegates who were the objects of much pressure from the three major factions. Also under considerable pressure were the delegates from New York who, though under the unit rule, claimed to be

<sup>40</sup> Richard Taylor, <u>Destruction and Reconstruction</u>: <u>Personal Experiences of the Late War</u> (New York, 1879), 12. Hereafter cited as Taylor, <u>Destruction and Reconstruction</u>.

independent and with their large bloc of votes could decide any question which was closely divided.

The final disruption came when Charles Stuart, a delegate from Michigan, who later in the day was accused by a Mississippi delegate of having freespil proclivities, took the floor and made "a very irritating speech, exceedingly ill-timed, unless he intended to drive out the Gulf States, and he has been accused of entertaining such purpose." He charged the South with asking the Northern delegates to adopt the new plank of Congressional protection of slavery in the territories and thus be forced to deny before their constituents the principle of non-intervention agreed upon in 1856. His remarks caused hostile reactions from Southern delegates, and Yancey rose to defend his state and the South. He denied that they objected to the Cincinnati platform but only to the construction put upon it by Douglas and his followers. 42

The rupture began when a delegate from Alabama, Leroy Walker, read a communication announcing the intention of his delegation to withdraw from the convention in accordance with the instructions received from its state convention. This action was followed by similar ones by delegates of Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, and Arkansas. Representatives of Georgia, Virginia, and Delaware asked for adjournment so that

Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 73. Speech by D. C. Glenn of Mississippi, Proceedings [Breckingridge], 121; see also H. S. Foote, War of the Rebellion (New York, 1866), 271.

<sup>42</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 82-83.

their delegations might have time to consult before making such a momentous decision.

The next morning, upon the reconvening of the delegates, the majority of the Georgia delegation withdrew. The pivotal Virginia delegation remained and kept alive the hope that harmony might be restored as it was thought that the South would not unite on any drastic measure without the participation of Virginia.43 Altogether, about two-thirds of the original convention remained. In this shrunken body the Douglasites got more than they had bargained for, which became painfully apparent when the rump convention passed a rule requiring a vote of two-thirds of the original convention for a nomination, or about five-sixths of those remaining. Now Douglas' nomination would be next to impossible to achieve. In this case again the role of New York was crucial when it cast its thirty-five votes with the majority and then proceeded to vote for Douglas "as if she meant it."44 An editorial in the Nashville Union and American asked: "Did they not do it with the view of slaughtering Mr. Douglas?"45

In spite of the apparent hopelessness of the task, the convention proceeded to go through the motions of voting for a

<sup>43</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 55-71; Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 68-89. One delegate from Delaware withdrew; two from Louisiana and three from South Carolina remained.

Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 98. The role of the New York delegation was also commented upon by Henry Fitch in a speech in Chicago reprinted in Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, August 29, 1860.

<sup>45</sup> Nashville, Tennessee, Union and American, May 6, 1860.

candidate. On the first ballot Douglas got 145 1/2 votes of the necessary 202 votes for a nomination. The other 107 1/2 votes were cast for a variety of candidates, with Hunter receiving the largest number. After fifty-seven ballots, none of which showed any sign of producing the necessary two-mirds majority, the delegates agreed to adjourn until June 18 when they would re-convene in Baltimore. The Douglas forces hoped that by that time the Cotton States would elect new delegates favorable to a unified national Democratic party.

Douglas faction by their secession from the convention, the majority of the seceders had second thoughts about their actions and proceeded with caution. Yancey showed his dissatisfaction with the action of the seceders when he wrote to a fellow fire-eater: "Our's [seceder's convention] had timid and perhaps wise men in our councils, who were seriously opposed to a nomination here or even a recommendation . . . our delegation yielded to this fact. . . . But we were unanimous as to the platform and as to the holding another convention at Richmond."

As the days passed, the rump convention failed to extend a conciliatory offer; disillusion replaced enthusiasm; and the adjournment of the regular convention to Baltimore was paralleled by the seceders' agreement to meet in Richmond, June 11.

<sup>46</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 74.

<sup>47</sup> Yancey to Clement C. Clay, May 4, 1860, Chay MSS.

The whole fiasco was well summed up in a letter of a moderate Southerner when he wrote: "The Democratic party, instead of being concentrated against the public enemy, presents the spectacle of quarreling about the ownership of the house while the burglars are rifling it." A similar image was used by a Southern editor writing shortly after the break-up of the convention:

The efforts to defeat Douglas have surpassed anything in political warfare that I have ever witnessed and while they may have succeeded, the movers, in all probability, have pulled down the temple of Democracy with them. As the proceedings of this Convention have shown far more clearly than I had supposed, he is the life and soul of the Democratic party in the free States. . . . Sound policy, good sense, and patriotism seemed to us to demand that the South should take him—at least acquiesce in his nomination. But a majority of the Southern delegations have thought otherwise it seems and if the results are disastrous, upon them rests the fearful responsibility. 49

The first battle for the presidency, 1860, had ended, but not the war. Though it was six weeks before the Democrats would reconvene at Baltimore, other important political events transpired during that interim. Before the Democrats met again two other political parties met and nominated presidential candidates.

In a convention at Baltimore which lasted only two days, the Constitutional Union party, successor to the old Whig party, made its nominations and adopted a platform. In contrast to the Democratic meeting at Charleston, the Constitutional

<sup>48</sup> Linton Stephens to Alexander H. Stephens, May 1, 1860. Microfilm of Stephens "Convent" Manuscripts at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

<sup>49</sup> Montgomery, Alabama, Confederation, May 5, 1860.

Union convention was characterized by harmony and good feeling. Rather than adopt a detailed platform this party which hoped to appeal to the moderate elements in all parts of the country simply endorsed "the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the Laws." The party nominated John Bell, senator from Tennessee for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for vice-president. Both men were known for their long years of service to the nation and for political integrity. Both were seen, however, by the opposing parties as rather lackluster candidates who were no real threat in the November election. 51

In contrast to the unanimity of the Constitutional Union convention was that of the young Republican party which met in Chicago from May 16-18. Both within the party and outside of it many had long believed that the nomination for the presidency would go to the most prominent Republican, Senator William H. Seward of New York. Like Douglas, however, Seward had been in the limelight too long and had acquired not only many friends, but also implacable enemies who were determined to see him deprived of the nomination which everyone believed he desired. The rupture of the Charleston convention complicated the Republican's task since they did not know who the Democratic nominee would be. Realizing their need to appeal to as broad a sector of the electorate as possible the Republicans passed over Seward and nominated Abraham Lincoln who was known to have

<sup>50</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>During the campaign this party was sometimes referred to as The Americans, and in the South, as the Opposition.

strength against Douglas in their home state of Illinois. The story of Lincoln's nomination has been told frequently and need not be repeated here.

For Douglas and the Democrats, however, it posed new problems which would have to be considered when they reconvened in Baltimore. Had Seward been the Republican nominee, the Democrats might have been assured of many moderate Northern votes from those who found Seward too outspoken in support of abolitionism. What little was known of Lincoln, however, showed him to be a moderate and increased the need for the Democrats to nominate someone who might effectively counter the appeal which Lincoln would have to this large segment of the electorate. The nomination of Lincoln posed a problem for those who opposed Douglas' nomination because it was obvious that no other Democrat could equal Douglas' appeal in the midwest. And with the Republican candidate coming from Illinois rather than from New York, these votes were much more doubtful.

with the seemingly hopeless task of reuniting their party Southern Democrats returned to their home states during the interim between conventions and tried to find solutions to their problems. The nominations made by the other two parties only served to complicate this task, and, in some ways underscore its hopelessness. How could a party which was at war with itself make a nomination satisfactory to itself as well as one with which it might effectively campaign for the office of the presidency?

## CHAPTER V

## THE INTERIM AND THE BALTIMORE CONVENTION: A REPEAT PERFORMANCE

In the South the news of the break-up of the Charleston convention and its adjournment to Baltimore caused an unprecedented flurry of political activity and excitement. The states which had withdrawn from the convention had just six weeks in which to decide what course was to be taken. Conventions were called, instructions issued, and editorializing resumed at fever pitch.

Many Southerners thought that there was some hope for harmony in the Baltimore meeting, but they differed in their ideas of how this might be achieved. The <u>Daily True Delta</u> of New Orleans, in an editorial on the rupture, laid the blame on the Yancey Ultras and the Administration forces, and declared: "The real cause for the secession was the certainty which confronted the bolters that the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas could not be defeated, nor, if nominated, his election prevented." But it also warned:

These disturbers of the public peace, these conspirators against the integrity of the Republic, these aspiring and plotting demagogues will discover that the people

are not the fools or the madmen they take them for, and that they know the true patriot from the impudent pretender and imposter, Stephen A. Douglas, from the Slidells, the Yanceys and the lower herd who bay at their heels and decry in impotent ravings his universal popularity with his countrymen.

Another New Orleans paper commented that if the Democratic party was so torn by factions it was "unworthy of the confidence of the country." But it concluded that, "the leaders of the Democratic organization might effect this glorious object, [national unity]" if they had "enough of intrinsic vigor and strength, enough of self-sacrificing spirit, to throw aside abstractions, bury their personal quarrels, stick to a national platform, and bring forward a national man."

Many, however, were still unwilling to acquiesce in the nomination of Douglas in spite of the strength he had commanded in Charleston. One Mississippi paper went so far as to say that defeat by the Republicans was better "than to succeed with such a man as Stephen A. Douglas and with such principals [sic] as he represents." Another editorial concluded that, "To nominate Douglas is at once and in advance to give up the fight." Still another warned that, "If his nomination would have been injudicious upon the assembling of the convention, we fear that it would be fatal now."

lMay 10, 1860, as quoted in Dwight Dumond, ed., Southern Editorials on Secession (New York, 1931), 86, 89. Hereafter cited as Dumond, Southern Editorials.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>New Orleans <u>Bee</u>, May 30, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Columbus, Mississippi, <u>Democrat</u>, May 19, 1860 as quoted in Reynolds, <u>Editors Make War</u>, 45; Louisville <u>Daily Courier</u>, May 26, 1860, as quoted in Dumond, <u>Southern Editorials</u>, 115; Nashville <u>Union and American</u>, May 8, 1860.

On the other hand, there was still strong support for Douglas from some quarters in the South. The leading Douglas organ in Georgia declared: "It is useless to deny the fact that the country is in a blaze of enthusiasm for him [Douglas]. The people are in his favor, and only the politicians who want a tool that will subserve their venal and corrupt purposes, are against him. He has refused to bow his head, and surrender his honor and his principle at the bequest of power, and with him in command of the Democratic army, we shall triumph gloriously." A month later, however, even this support had weakened when the same editor gave evidence of modified views: "We yet think that [Douglas'] true policy would be to throw his influence to some friend." And in answer to his own question as to whether or not Douglas would ever be President, gave this "We doubt it, for Republics are ungrateful; and like Webster, Calhoun, and Clay, he is too great for President."4

Douglas' mail during the interim was full of encouragement from Southern supporters. A Virginian advised him: "The Douglas men in the convention will probably have to make some little apparent concession in order to meet the views of the fanatics with whom they will have to contend. All we desire is, to get you the nomination. And in that event we will fear nothing." Support was present even in the strongholds of the fire-eaters. From Atlanta a supporter wrote, "You occupy the middle ground, and truly, and consistently represent the only

Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, May 19, June 13, 1860.

just and National policy now presented to the people, and hence we think our countries [sic] safety in the present crisis depends upon the use of your name." And from Arkansas came the expression of a sentiment often expressed by the common people among Douglas' supporters. "The people . . . the bone and sinew of the country are at least for you, notwithstanding their misguided leaders."

Perhaps the most realistic appraisal came from John Duncan, a Douglas supporter and editor of the Atlanta <u>Intelligencer</u>. He said that he would speak in "the language and spirit of candour . . . under the impression that I am doing what I honestly conceive to be best for you -- for our party and for the country." He continued, "The public mind had been systematically poisoned against you in Georgia & throughout the South, all the power of the administration has been devoted to this end, & by fanning very shrewdly but very dishonestly the straightout disunion & Southern Rights sentiment . . . they have pulled the wool over the syes of that class of our people until all of us who will not indorse the Charleston Seceders & Congressional Intervention for Protection are pointed at as 'Douglas men' & thereby seem to be regarded as heretics to the South and her interests." After predicting the further disruption of the party if Douglas should be the nominee at Baltimore, Duncan recommended the nomination "of a firm fast friend

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Thomas Turner to Douglas, June 10, 1860; J. A. Stewart to Douglas, June 11, 1860; J. A. Smith to Douglas, June 16, 1860; D. H. C. Moore to Douglas, June 3, 1860, Douglas MSS.

of yours in the South who would take the wind out of the sails of the Cobb-Yancey & Slidell combination & secure their entire overthrow & bring about the exposure of the game they are playing.

Letters of both Southern leaders and administration backers were filled with threats, advice, and predictions concerning the Baltimore meeting. Slidell wrote a public letter to the Louisiana State Democratic Committee in which he upheld the action of the seceders and recommended that the state send a delegation both to Richmond and to Baltimore. 7

Among those who worked to restore harmony among the Democrats during this interim was Herschel Johnson. His position after the rupture at Charleston was that the nation was in grave peril, and he joined with those who favored a conciliatory approach toward the northern wing of the party. In answering inquiries from various Georgians and in the interim state convention Johnson argued that though the South was entitled to ask for congressional protection for slavery in the territories, that as a practical point it was best not to insist on the point at this time. Such sentiments Johnson recorded in his autobiography, "subjected me to severe criticism and animadversion on the part of some of my cherished friends."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>John W. Duncan to Douglas, June 8, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Letter of John Slidell to Louisiana State Democratic Committee, May 19, 1860. Published in Washington Evening Star, May 26, 1860.

<sup>8</sup> Autobiography, 128.

Johnson and other Southerners who hoped for harmony seemed doomed to failure. Some who had witnessed the Charleston sessions were aware of the intransigence underlying the talk of compromise. Thus, writing about Slidell, a Virginian told Hunter that, "Slidell got alarmed when he found New York false & regarded the whole as lost. In my opinion he is the father of the Secession. He wanted Virginia to go out. His whole aim was patent to break down Douglas & he would have killed you without scruple to get at Douglas." A year before the convention, in response to Douglas' letter announcing his availability as a candidate Slidell had written to Buchanan that this was "an unequivocal declaration of war."

Howell Cobb found himself standing in both the administration and the fire-eaters camps, the first being his usual position, but the second representing a new and uneasy alliance since he had been at loggerheads with the fire-eaters for a decade over questions of state versus national rights. Now expediency dictated that he cooperate with his former foes for the defeat of Douglas. Upon the adjournment at Charleston, Cobb wrote to his brother-in-law, "There is one point upon which I trust Georgia will stand firm and that is under no

<sup>9</sup>Lucius W. Washington to Robert M. T. Hunter, May 5, 1860, Hunter Manuscripts, University of Virginia, microfilm.

<sup>10</sup> Slidell to Buchanan, July 3, 1859, Buchanan MSS. Richard Taylor, himself a delegate from Louisiana said in his book, <u>Destruction</u> and <u>Reconstruction</u> that Slidell went to Charleston "under the impulse of hostility to the principles and candidacy of Mr. Douglas," 12. Slidell's biographer, Louis Sears, relies on Halstead's testimony for his account of Slidell's conduct and motives at Charleston.

circumstances to support Douglas." And a little later he speculated on the outcome at Baltimore. "My opinion now is that our friends . . . will be able to defeat Douglas and get both a good man and a sound platform. . . . I believe that the best chance now is to take a northern man--any of them will be acceptable after we get clear of Douglas."

Another Southern senator, Robert Toombs of Georgia, gave a less emotional evaluation of the rupture at Charleston when writing to Alexander H. Stephens, a moderate Southerner and friend of Douglas:

The truth is the rivalry and rancor between the friends of Douglas and all the rest was so great and is now so great that I do not see how it can possibly be reconciled without the withdrawal of the combatants on both sides, which I think none of them have patriotism enough to do . . . The real difficulty at Charleston was that a large number of Democrats North and South had committed themselves so far against Douglas that they were lost if he was nominated, and they therefore preferred ruining the party with themselves than ruining themselves without [ruining] the party.12

The one group outside the South which was so important in any hope of achieving unity at Baltimore was the New York delegation. The fight against Douglas was particularly important there because of the power of its large vote to decide almost any motion. Douglas had the support of Tammany Hall and many

ll Howell Cobb to John B. Lamar, May 3, 1860, Cobb MSS. May 22, 1860, Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 480. Jefferson Davis wrote to former President Franklin F. Pierce that the South would not support Douglas and that if he were nominated the nationality of the party would be destroyed. Davis to Pierce, June 13, 1860, Franklin Pierce Manuscripts, II, No. 7, Library of Congress.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Toombs to Alexander H. Stephens, May 5, 1860, Toombs. Stephens, Cobb Correspondence, 468-469.

New York politicians, but he had an almost equal number of enemies, supporters of the Buchanan administration or Southern sympathizers. One of these, writing to Buchanan during the interim, declared:

Mr. Douglas, and his policy of warfare upon your administration are not popular here, and never have been: and if those of your Federal officers who are anti-Douglas . . . will take the initiative, . . . it will be as easy to make a powerful manifestation in support of the Administration, and against the course and candidacy of the Illinois disorganizer, as it was for us to sustain your policy in December, 1858, on the Lecompton Constitution. . . . No Tammany, and no Baltimore or other Convention, and no pretense of regularity or usage can compel us to vote for Douglas. 13

Every faction worked for a declaration of support by New York, but even after the opening of the Baltimore meeting the delegation refused to commit itself publicly to any candidate or program.

As might have been expected the acrimonious feelings engendered by the events at Charleston found their way into the halls of Congress. One newspaper reported that, "The impending rupture at Baltimore exercises the Democratic members of Congress to such an extent that they are hardly disposed to attend to much more legislative business." The all-engrossing topic, not only in the minds of the congressmen, but even of floor debate was that which divided the Democracy.

After the disruption at Charleston, Jefferson Davis reintroduced his earlier resolutions which demanded

<sup>13</sup> Gideon Tucker to Buchanan, May 25, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>14</sup> Savannah, Georgia, Daily Morning News, June 18, 1860.

congressional protection for slavery in the territories. Though Davis declared that the purpose of the resolutions was to "speak our sentiments as to the right of persons and property, the obligations and duties of the Constitution," they were seen by many politicians to have as their real purpose "the political effect of killing off the great non-interventionist, Douglas."

On May 15 and 16, Douglas delivered a speech in the Senate on non-interference by Congress with slavery in the territories and during it he was frequently interrupted by Davis. The two exchanged hot words on both political and personal matters.

Each accused the other of favoring and causing disunion; each refused to give quarter to his opponent on any point. 15

During the interim the Southern Senators and Representatives issued an "Address to the National Democracy," urging the seceded delegates to participate in the Baltimore convention to attempt to achieve the platform the South had asked for in Charleston. The letter did not advise compromise but rather the presentation of a united front at Baltimore to attain the ends denied the South at Charleston. The motive of uniting those who opposed Douglas was largely accomplished, and almost all of the seceding delegates were determined to appear at Baltimore.

As the re-opening of the convention approached, delegates, politicians, reporters, and hordes of outsiders again

<sup>15</sup>Congressional Globe, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 1944 (May 7, 1860); Natchez, Mississippi Free Trader, June 15, 1860, as quoted in Rainwater, Mississippi, 116; Congressional Globe, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., App. 313 et. seq. (May 15-16, 1860).

converged first on Washington, then on Baltimore. Three days before the Baltimore meeting opened, the hotels in Washington were turning away guests. Among the prominent men in the capital Yancey received wide press coverage. He talked both with secessionist leaders and with the Douglas men. On the Friday before the opening of the convention Yancey called on Douglas, and the report was that the conferees "had a good time." The visit set "all sorts of rumors afloat that Yancey was going to run as a candidate for Vice-President with Douglas." Another paper reported that, "Mr. Yancey does not expect harmony at Baltimore, nor does any one else."

Douglas delegates, too, came to the capital to consult with their leader and with each other. A Douglas paper related that "the reception rooms of Judge Douglas are constantly filled by visitors. The 'latch string hangs outside' of the door, and personal and political friends, as well as political opponents, all visit the 'little giant'. "17 An unfriendly journal, however, took a different view of the Douglas caucusing. "The Squatters are as boastful as ever, and it is

Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, June 21, 23, 1860; Savannah, Georgia, Daily Morning News, June 18, 1860. It was not until the mid-20th century that the office of Vice President assumed the importance it has today. Thus, in 1860 speculation as to who would get the nomination was minimal. See above, Chapter III, p. 85. This story concerning Yancey was brought up again during the campaign. Charleston, South Carolina, Mercury, September 11, 1860. One report asserted that George Sanders was Douglas' intermediary with Yancey. Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, October 26, 1860, also unidentified newspaper clipping hand dated, October 18, 1860 in Wm. L. Yancey Papers, Alabama Archives.

<sup>17</sup> Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, June 21, 1860.

understood that in some manner their chieftain is to run the race-is to have a nomination of some kind."18

The Southern seceders who had assembled in Richmond the week before went to Washington before going on to Baltimore.

At Richmond they had decided to make no nomination until the outcome of the Baltimore meeting was known. As a matter of fact, all except the Florida delegation had been instructed by state conventions to reclaim their seats in the Baltimore meeting. During the interim, however, several of the Douglas Democrats in the South had appointed new delegations and the seats would be contested by the two groups. This was the first issue to be decided upon the re-convening of the party delegates. The Charleston Mercury predicted that if the seceders were not admitted and the "bogus" delegations excluded, "this act will be the first to create discord, and may, of itself, drive every Southern State out of the Convention."

On the eve of the convention a Baltimore editor asserted that chances for "a solution of the difficulties . . . appeared . . . to be a shade better. The prominent men of both sides were more inclined to talk calmly over the prospects of the party, and while the firmness of neither section appeared to be in the least shaken, there seemed to be a more lively appreciation of the madness of disunion on the question of candidates."

The editorial went on to summarize those facts which were

<sup>18</sup> Washington dispatch, June 15, in Charleston Mercury, June 18, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Ibid., June 15, 1860.

## regarded as certain:

That the Douglas men have a majority of the whole Convention, and nething can be done outside of the nomination of candidates without their consent.

That Douglas cannot get a two-thirds vote, and can only be nominated, if the South remains in Convention, by the adoption of the majority rule, or if the seceding delegates remain out, by interpreting the two-thirds rule to mean two-thirds of those present and voting.

That Douglas has enough positive strength to prevent the nomination of any other candidate, unless acceptable to his supporters.<sup>20</sup>

By Saturday, June 16, Baltimore was crowded with delegates and with thousands of others. In contrast to Charleston, the pressure from non-delegates was now almost entirely in favor of Douglas, for, as one Southern paper declared, "an immense number of rowdies from this city [Washington], from Philadelphia and New York, with a thousand fighting men from Illinois and Ohio, are expected at the Monumental City." It was predicted by some that the presence of such crowds would promote violence and make rational settlement of differences even more difficult.

The Douglas headquarters in Baltimore, at the home of Reverdy Johnson, and the Southern headquarters at the Gilmore house were across the square from each other, and rival speeches and bands contended for the attention of the crowds. In the words of a local reporter, these crowds "packed fuel beneath the already boiling cauldron."

Baltimore, American and Commercial Advertiser, June 18, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Savannah, Georgia, <u>Daily Morning News</u>, June 18, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Baltimore <u>Sun</u>, June 18, 1860.

"As at Charleston, every person and passion and prejudice was for or against Mr. Douglas."<sup>23</sup> In describing the preconvention discussions one Southern reporter asserted, "The Douglas men were decidedly the most violent, and whenever any of them could get an anti-Douglas man to enter into discussion, there was sure to be animated, if not angry talk." In describing the Southern delegates, however, he was kinder. "They avoided all discussion, but when the name of Douglas was mentioned there was an ominous shake of the head and compression of the lips."<sup>24</sup>

In such spirits the convention assembled on Monday morning, June 18, at the Front Street Theatre. Tickets for outsiders were supposedly free but there were reports that they were sold for between two and five dollars. Extra ventilation as well as lighting arrangements in case of evening sessions had been provided. The meeting place was connected by means of wires to the central telegraph office so that dispatches could be transmitted over the whole country without delay.<sup>25</sup>

The convention was called to order at 11:10 A.M. by the chairman, Caleb Cushing. He made a speech summarizing the three major pieces of business before the delegates, namely, to decide

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 186.

<sup>24</sup> Savannah <u>Daily Morning News</u>, June 21, 1860. Such contrasting descriptions were also reported in Baltimore <u>American and Commercial Advertiser</u>, June 18, and in Nashville <u>Union and American</u>, June 22, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Savannah <u>Daily Morning News</u>, June 25, 1860; Baltimore <u>Sun</u>, June 18, 1860.

upon the question of the seating of the delegates who had seceded from the Charleston convention or the contesting delegations from the same states; to finalize the platform of the party; and to nominate a presidential candidate.<sup>26</sup>

Following Cushing's speech, four different resolutions aimed at settling the admission of seceded delegations were offered. The one which prompted the most public response asked for the re-admission of the seceded delegates only on condition that they pledge support to the nominee of the convention. This resolution was met with a mixture of applause and hisses from both delegates and the galleries. And when floor discussion finally opened, it centered on this resolution. Delegates from the border states and the few from the deep South who had not seceded favored the admission of all Charleston delegates and argued that asking such a pledge was demanding something not demanded of other convention delegates. Congressman William Montgomery of Pennsylvania, a Douglas supporter, replied, "There is not a Democrat upon this floor who is not under the most solemn pledges of his honor as a man, and of his integrity as a Democrat, to abide by the nominations that we may make." Again both the delegates and the galleries applauded and hissed and were declared out of order by the president. In Halstead's view this was "the speech of the day. It was considerably more than red hot, and by the time he [Montgomery] had concluded, the political atmosphere was at the temperature it reached in

<sup>26</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 95-96.

Charleston just before the explosion. "27

A delegate from Tennessee then made a speech, described by Halstead as one "begging for conciliation--which means, cut the throat of Douglas!" This was followed by a similar appeal to put no obstacles in the way of the return of the seceding delegations. These two efforts were applauded by Southern delegates and supporters. A delegate from Missouri made an inflammatory speech accusing the seceders of coming to Baltimore only to get their own way and, if not, to go back to Richmond to "put in nomination some man who has neither the heels nor bottom enough to get the nomination here, and put him up against the [nominee] of the Democratic party." This speech was seconded by one given by a Connecticut delegate who declared that the seceders had gone out of their own choice and so had no special claims on re-admission. 28

After almost six hours of debate, the first day's proceedings closed. Halstead thought that Douglas' cause had been damaged by the acrimonious tone of his supporters, but the newspaperman noted the enthusiastic meeting held outside the Douglas headquarters for more than three hours that night. The Washington Evening Star reported that "three magnificent bands of music, and a large body of outsiders from a distance" gathered each evening outside Douglas' headquarters. But also noted that "the Douglas orators were utterly unable on any

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 197, 200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup><u>Tbid</u>., 201, 203, 205.

'the Square' in front of Gilmor House." The report further contended that "Baltimore's Democracy, with great unanimity, regard Douglas and Douglasism as traitorous." And the local crowd joined the demonstrations in front of the Gilmor house which lasted longer and were louder than the Douglas meetings. The crowds shouted over and over for Yancey, and on two occasions he appeared and gave extemporaneous speeches. 29

One young Southerner described the tactics allegedly used by some Douglasites during the recesses of the convention.

"They play a fancy game, two of them will meet accidently [sic] & commence a conversation one for Douglas one against. They will talk until a crowd collects & then the man talking against Douglas will commence backing down & at last will allow the other to wool him completely and winde [sic] up by the crowd cheering Douglas—there are men here hired to carry on that game, ain't they getting hard up."30

As the days wore on, the violence predicted before the re-opening of the convention became a reality as tempers on both sides flared. A fight between members from rival Arkansas delegations erupted on the floor of the committee on credentials when one man struck the other in the face and drew a pistol. The Arkansans were separated by friends, and a duel was avoided only after a series of notes were exchanged according to the

<sup>29</sup> Toid., 207; Washington Evening Star, June 27, 1860.

<sup>30</sup> John Cobb to John B. Lamar, June 20, 1860, Cobb MSS. John was Howell Cobb's son.

rival Deleware delegates began in the same committee room and was supposedly finished after others intervened. At five o'clock the next morning, however, one of the combatants went to the other's hotel and attacked him. The ensuing brawl was stopped by the hotel clerk and a passing policeman, and the assailant was taken away. Such incidents were not unique and evidenced the deep animosity between factions.<sup>31</sup>

On the second day the convention met in the morning and agreed to commit the entire matter of the seating of seceded delegates to a committee on credentials without further instructions. After this decision, the meeting adjourned until five o'clock, to reassemble then only long enough for the president to announce that the committee was not ready to report.

In deciding the fate of the reports of the committee on credentials, the vote of New York was judged as pivotal by Herschel Johnson because of its large number of votes. The Douglas men feared that the support they had formerly received from the Empire State had weakened. This was based on New York's refusal to vote positively on the previous resolution to impose conditions on the seceders before allowing their return. The New Yorkers, however, refused to commit themselves to either side during the time when the committee was meeting, saying only that "their course has been an entirely independent, patriotic, and conservative one, from the moment of their admission at

Morning News, June 23, 1860 as well as in other papers.

Charleston up to the present time. . . That they have been ready from the start to throw their entire strength into the scale of harmony upon the platform and candidate questions whenever their vote will make a harmonious platform and nomination.

The third day was a repetition of the second, for the credentials committee was still not ready to report. The delay permitted the circulation of rumors which only increased the tensions under which all factions labored. The most popular rumor, the Baltimore Sun stated, was that the report of the credentials committee would recommend the admission of some but not all of the seceders and that anything less than the admission of all seceders without conditions would lead to a break-up of the whole convention. This attitude was reflected in a letter written by Howell Cobb's son: "The Southern delegates here are perfectly indifferent in regard to the action of the convention in regard to their seats. Most of them are anxious to return to Richmond."

The ominous direction that the convention was taking was dramatically symbolized by the collapse of a portion of the flooring under the delegates at the beginning of the fourth day's proceedings. After a recess for the repair of the floor, the reports of the committee on credentials were finally presented.

Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, June 19, 1860, Johnson MSS; Washington Evening Star, June 20, 1860. On New York's role see Bonham, "New York and the Election of 1860," 132-135. This article also points out the role of divisions in the New York Republican party in blocking Seward's nomination at Chicago, 135-140.

<sup>33</sup>Baltimore Sun, June 21, 1860; John Cobb to John B. Lamar, June 20, 1860, Cobb MSS.

The majority report called for the seating of new delegations from Alabama and Louisiana, for the admission of both the old and new delegations from Arkansas and Georgia with the dividing of the vote between them, and for the re-admission of the bolting delegates from Texas, Mississippi, and Delaware whose seats were not contested. Florida and South Carolina were not seeking re-admission. Two minority reports were presented, one calling for the re-admission of all bolters except the Yancey men from Alabama and the second recommending the re-admission of all bolters. The request of the New York delegation for time to consult brought the session to an end with no vote having been taken. 34

As on every other evening Monument Square was the scene of opposing mass meetings which did "much to exasperate the pending controversy. The friends of Douglas denounced the others as disorganizers, bolters, traitors, and disunionists. The Southerners called the Douglasites a sneaking species of Abolitionists."

On June 22, the fifth day of the gathering in Baltimore, the votes upon the reports of the committee on credentials were finally taken. The direction in which the question would be decided was evident when, upon a vote to substitute one of the minority reports for the majority report, New York voted nay and made certain the passage of the report favored by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup>Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 211-220; <u>Proceedings</u> [Douglas], 111-125.

<sup>35</sup> Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 221.

Douglasites. After this victory of Douglas' supporters, the report of the majority was voted upon section by section and was passed rather harmoniously until the question of the admission of the new Alabama delegation and the admission of portions of both Georgia delegations were woted on. The yeas prevailed on the former motion, 148 1/2 to 101 1/2, which antagonized the Southern faction. The latter resolution was defeated 106 1/2 yeas, 145 nays. A few minutes later it was moved and agreed upon to admit the regular delegation from Georgia. This left only the Alabama question without an answer satisfactory to the South.

Following this vote, former national party chairman
Benjamin Hallett of Massachusetts made a speech begging for
harmony and pointing out the futility of adopting measures which
were sure to divide the party and perhaps the Union and reminding the delegates that it would be fruitless to sacrifice unity
at the price of having no Union for which to nominate a President. After predicting the ruin of both Douglas and the Union
if the wishes of the South were not met, he pleaded for
compromise:

I stand here today a personal friend of the man whose friends are about to sacrifice him, as I view it. I would rather see him elevated to the Presidency than any other man in this Union, if it could be done without the destruction of this party. . . . But no—men here say, let us have this man or none; we will have no other but him. Where is the discriminating justice which shall impel you to the adjustment of this great question. 30

<sup>36</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 125-152; Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 229.

But Hallet's plea fell on deaf ears, for Charles
Russell of Virginia rose to announce that when the majority
report of the credentials committee was finally adopted, Virginia
would leave the convention. On this dire note the meeting
adjourned until seven that evening. In the interim there were
rumors that Douglas had sent a letter to Dean Richmond, chairman of the New York delegation, withdrawing his name from the
convention. The rumor was generally not believed, however,
since everyone thought that any such letter from Douglas would
be written to William Richardson, Douglas' manager. 37

The evening session was hardly underway when Russell again rose and announced the withdrawal of most of the Virginians, saying they would explain their reasons only to the Democracy of Virginia. In quick succession most of the delegates from North Carolina and Tennessee left; the Kentucky delegates retired to consult; half of the Maryland delegation withdrew; Missouri left to consult; all the delegates from California and Oregon withdrew. On the following morning most of the Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas delegates left. As a final sign of the utter shattering of the convention, Caleb Cushing, a Massachusetts man but a strong pro-slavery advocate and president of the convention, announced his withdrawal. 38

Douglas had sent letters to both Richardson and Richmond but both had refused to use them.

<sup>38</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 144-151, 155.

After further withdrawals by individual delegates and endless speechmaking, the remaining delegates began voting for a nominee. On the first ballot Douglas received 173 1/2 votes to 18 scattered votes for others. After the second ballot when Douglas received 181 1/2 votes, his nomination was declared unanimous. This was followed by more speech-making praising Douglas and promising support for him.

The convention then adjourned until evening in order to caucus on the nomination of a Vice-Presidential candidate. deference to the Southerners who had remained in the convention, (mostly Douglas delegates appointed after the Charleston rupture) this choice was left up to them. It was widely understood that Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia was Douglas' first choice for a running mate, as well as the first choice of most Northern Democrats. And at the Southern caucus Louisiana "led off for [Stephens] with enthusiasm and Arkansas followed." But the Alabama delegates begged for Benjamin Fitzpatrick, a senator from their state, urging that with his name on the ticket they could win Alabama for Douglas and defeat Yancey's group. Two points made against Stephens were his frail health and his opposition to the Mexican War. This last was a point the Democrats expected to use against Lincoln and if Stephens were on their ticket it could not be used. When the convention resumed that evening, then, Fitzpatrick was nominated on the first ballot. 59

<sup>39</sup>Linton Stephens to Alexander H. Stephens, June 28, 1860. Microfilm of Stephens Convent MSS, Emory University. Linton communicated to his brother an account of the Southern

The convention closed after Richardson read the letter which Douglas had sent earlier in the week offering to withdraw his name, if by so doing the party could be saved, but still refusing to give up the principle of non-intervention.

Richardson said he had had no opportunity to use the letter as a conciliatory gesture because "those gentlemen who have seceded from this Convention placed it out of my power to use it. And the responsibility, therefore, is on them."

Charles Stuart of Michigan, whom the Southerners had accused of being an abolitionist, proposed adjournment that they might go where the enemies were and "conquer them in a hand-to-hand fight." The convention adjourned with the delegates pledging to carry the fight to their respective states and to bring victory to the Democratic party in November. The odds against their success were great, but those who had worked so hard for Douglas' nomination apparently thought themselves equal to any task.

At the close of the convention a delegation was appointed to notify Douglas and Fitzpatrick officially of their nominations. Upon arrival in Washington the delegation went to each residence. Douglas came out to meet the group and gave a short speech accepting the nomination. At the end of his speech he struck the keynote of the campaign he would run to win the

caucus told him by W. B. Gaulden, a Georgia Douglas delegate who had been present. Halstead, Three Against Lincoln, 255.

<sup>40</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 177-180.

<sup>41</sup> Toid., 181.

presidency. "It is our mission, . . . to save the Constitution and the Union from the assaults of Northern Abolitionists and Southern disunionists."

When the delegation went to the residence of Fitzpatrick, he did not come out to respond, but rumor said that he would accept. In a letter directed to the executive committee of the party, however, Fitzpatrick declined the nomination saying that the differences existing in the party were of such a nature that he could not be a part of further divisiveness and that "I should in no way contribute to these unfortunate divisions."

Those who had put Fitzpatrick's name before the convention claimed to have had his assurance that he would accept. First among these was John J. Seibels, editor of the Montgomery, Alabama, Confederation and a close friend of Fitzpatrick's.

Seibels had gone to Washington the night before the nominations were made and had talked with Fitzpatrick about the possibility of his receiving the second place on the ticket.

In a letter to Seibels written shortly after the convention, Fitzpatrick told his side of the story. In it he claimed that in light of the divisions in the Baltimore convention, he had told Seibels he would not accept a place on the ticket with Douglas. In defense of his rejecting the nomination Fitzpatrick wrote: "To have accepted the nomination under these circumstances would have subjected me to the imputation of having

<sup>42</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping in Charleston Democratic Convention Papers, Duke University Manuscript collection.

<sup>43</sup>Proceedings [Douglas], 184.

abandoned opinions, well settled and declared to the world, for power and place."44

At least two other accounts of Fitzpatrick's refusal of the nomination were circulated. The Charleston Mercury claimed that, "When the awful consequences stared at him, and he realized the fate which must inevitably overtake one in such a position, he began to feel the mistakes which had been made, and he could not go home to his people as the nominee with Douglas." A Georgia delegate to the convention, however, gave a different account of the gossip which was current in Washington. According to this version, "The Administration men persuaded [Fitzpatrick] that if he would decline, Douglas would be constrained to do likewise, that Breckenridge and Lane would follow suit, and that then the two reunited wings would put up old Fitz himself for President as a just tribute to the great harmonizer who had set aside his own just ambition for the good of his country."

The unexpected withdrawal of Fitzpatrick from the Democratic ticket left the executive committee with the task of choosing another vice-presidential candidate. The choice fell

H. Roberts, "Benjamin Fitzpatrick and the Vice Presidency," Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society, IV (1899-1903), 361-362. Neither date nor source of original letter is given in this article.

<sup>45</sup> Washington dispatch, June 26, in Charleston Mercury, June 29, 1860.

<sup>46</sup>Linton Stephens to Alexander Stephens quoting W. B. Gaulden, June 28, 1860. Microfilm of Stephens Convent MSS.

on Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia, who had been a delegate to the Baltimore convention with the Douglas group and was known to be willing to accept the position. In spite of encouragements from Southern friends to decline, Johnson chose to accept the nomination. In his speech when the nomination was tendered to him, Johnson declared that the Southerners, if they had remained in the convention, had had the power to prevent the nomination of any candidate unacceptable to them. That By their secession they had abdicated the right to designate a candidate. In assigning the reason for the disruption, Johnson said: "They were waging war against the distinguished man, not for the maintenance of the 'principle'; they were willing to jeopardize the integrity of the Democratic party and the triumph of its cherished principles rather than see its will proclaimed in the nomination of its favorites."

A few days after accepting the nomination Johnson wrote to Alexander H. Stephens explaining that he was "literally forced to take [it]." In another letter to Stephens, Johnson declared: "As God is my judge, this is my only motive for accepting the position I have—to save if possible a fragment of the party organized upon the principle of nonintervention." Farther on in the same letter Johnson echoed Douglas' sentiments of the importance of making efforts "to maintain the principles which . . . are essential to the well being of the

<sup>47</sup> Proceedings [Douglas], 185-186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup>Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, June 29, 1860, Johnson MSS.

South & the Union."49 Together Douglas and Johnson would work not only to win the election, but also to alert the people of the danger which threatened the Union.

Meanwhile, instead of journeying back to Richmond, the seceders had met at Maryland Institute Hall in Baltimore. Halstead remarked on the change in atmosphere from the recent preceedings at the Front Street Theatre. Now all was harmony and good feeling. Typical was his description of Yancey, who "twisted about in his seat with the unrest of intolerable felicity, laid his head first upon one shoulder and then the other, and glowed with satisfaction."

In a single session the seceders adopted the platform contained in the majority report of the Charleston convention and nominated John C. Breckenridge of Kentucky for President and Joseph Lane of Oregon for Vice-President. After appropriate cheering a speech was demanded of Yancey who complied all too willingly. He spoke so long that hundreds in the audience left. Once he was interrupted on a point of business but failed to take the hint and went on at great length justifying Alabama's position and disclaiming disunionism, though in a manner which was not very convincing. An undesirable result of this speech, as Halstead saw the matter, was that Yancey "was identifying his name, and the ultraism of Alabama too intimately and conspicuously with the movement represented in that hall." 51 When

<sup>49</sup> Johnson to Stephens, July 4, 1860, Johnson MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Halstead, <u>Three Against Lincoln</u>, 267-268.

<sup>51 &</sup>lt;u>Tbid.</u>, 174-177.

Yancey had at last finished, the convention adjourned to go out to meet the Douglas Democrats and the Black Republicans upon the hustings in the "hand to hand fight" Charles Stuart had challenged them to.

So ended the formal dismemberment of the Democratic party by its leaders. They were not wise enough to recognize the imminent peril in which their action put the Union nor were they unselfish enough to avert such a disaster. How little support their actions had among the general public was well expressed by a journalist writing shortly after the close of the convention:

The era of good feeling has apparently past, and nothing but bitterness and hatred seem now to actuate those who are accredited here as representatives of what once was . . . the great National Democratic party of the country. It is not for us here to allege who is to blame for this condition of things; whether the friends or the opponents of Stephen A. Doublas, should answer this count in the indictment against them. Of one thing, however, we are assured, viz: that the people are not creating the disturbances which now present so threatening an aspect. It is the politicians of the country, that are thus dividing and distracting us.52

<sup>1860.</sup> Clipping found in Jesse Turner Scrapbook on Election of 1860 in Duke University Manuscript Collection. Another Virginia newspaper, the Lynchburg Republican (which supported Brecken-ridge and Lane) wrote that Douglas "was the choice of two-thirds of the Democratic party of the Union-that he was entitled to the nomination of the National Convention," as quoted in the Montgomery, Alabama, Confederation, July 8, 1860. This same sentiment was expressed in some of the letters which Douglas received during the campaign. One correspondent from Florida said that he doubted that there would be a Douglas electoral ticket in the state, but that "an honest expression of public Sentiment would give it; but such is the force of Government patronage with the politicians, that I fear they will prevent any such step." Thomas F. Hayes to Douglas, July 20, 1860,

Douglas MSS. Another from Virginia wrote, "The politicians and village street talkers are against you—not so with the steady farmers of the country." Charles Hoge (a Charleston delegate) to Douglas, July 11, 1860, Douglas MSS. Another Virginian wrote: "Many of the seceders from the Baltimore convention utterly disregarded the wishes of those they were sent to represent." G. A. Hamille, July 16, 1860, Douglas MSS.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE DOUGLAS-JOHNSON CAMPAIGN: A MIDDLE COURSE BETWEEN EXTREMES

The Charleston-Baltimore convention was unique on several scores among national political gatherings: its length, the disruption of the Democratic party, and its fateful consequence of virtually making certain a Republican presidential victory and the subsequent secession of the Southern states. Not many observers recognized the gravity of the situation at the time, but it was well expressed by one editor of a Southern paper when he remarked: "After six days of painful and protracted labor the mountain of Democracy brought forth a Squatter Sovereignty mouse and expired in its travails."

The pessimism implied by this statement was, however, overshadowed by the optimism expressed on all sides as the campaign for the presidency got under way. In the Douglas wing of the Democratic party this optimism was evident first of all in the letters which Douglas himself wrote shortly after he received the nomination. To one correspondent he reported:

<sup>1</sup> Rome, Georgia, Courier, July 3, 1860.

"The reaction in our favor is immense, and we are gaining every day." To another, Douglas sounded the tocsin of the campaign:
"No time must be lost, and no effort spared. . . . We must make the war boldly against the Northern abolitionists and the Southern Disunionists, and give no quarter to either."

letters from supporters who applauded his nomination led Douglas to remain optimistic about his candidacy. One letter summarized the source of Douglas' popularity: "Your strength does not consist of power and patronage of the General Government, but in the courage displayed in combating against it; and for that which you believe of more importance to secure than the Presidency itself—the peace and harmony of the whole country."

Another writer expressed approval of Douglas' principles when he admonished: "Stand to your late acceptance speech, and the people will stand to you."

James Gardner, a newspaper publisher in Georgia wrote of the situation in the deep South:

"Our cause grows stronger every day, and every hour in the day."

Some letters of Douglas' Southern friends, letters which were not meant to be seen by the Little Giant were, how-ever, less optimistic. Alexander H. Stephens confided to his friend, J. Henly Smith: "No man ever had more cause to exclaim 'save me from my friends' than Douglas has, particularly from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Douglas to Nathaniel Paschall, July 4, 1860, and to Charles Lanphier, July 5, 1860, <u>Letters</u>, 497, 498.

<sup>3</sup>H. V. West to Douglas, July 12, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>J. M. Yost to Douglas, July 1, 1860, <u>Toid</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>James Gardner to Douglas, July 7, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

his friends at the South. . . . I am pained and grieved at the folly which thus demanded the sacrifice of such a noble and gallant spirit as I believe Douglas to be."

John Forsyth, an Alabama state legislator and newspaper editor, when accused of being a "Douglas man," replied: "It is not for Douglas that I principally speak. It is for my country, for the honor and welfare of . . . [the] South, both of which are in danger of being dragged down into the dust of humiliation and ruin by the 'madness that rules the hour.'" After proclaiming non-intervention the only hope for the preservation of the Union, Forsyth warned his accusers: "You have sworn for the South that it will not tolerate a Black Republican Government. Then set your house in order for it, because if you do not throw down your firebrand tests and close up the Democratic ranks, as sure as the hand on the dial will travel on the appointed time, so sure will you have that Black Republican Administration. And then, gentlemen, what becomes of your claim for protection in the Territories?"

Some Southern newspapers carried evidence of popular support for the Douglas-Johnson nomination. A New Orleans paper reported that though Douglas supporters had been expected to "cave-in' and give up the ghost" in a short time, they had

Stephens to J. Henly Smith, July 2, 1860, Toombs, Stephens, Cobb Correspondence, 484-485.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>John Forsyth to the Montgomery, Alabama, <u>Advertiser</u>. Unnamed, undated newspaper clipping in John A. Logan Collection, Scrapbook 1859-1860, Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as Logan Papers.

instead adhered "to the cause with a tenacity worthy of all admiration, and we confess ourselves surprised at the formidable appearance they now present in nearly every Southern State."

The editors of the Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, the most influential Southern paper to support Douglas' candidacy, attempted to explain in their editorials the reasons which compelled them to work for Douglas' election: "As to Douglas and the South, we shall place on the witness stand every Republican in the North, to prove that their only objection to him is his fidelity to us [Southerners]."9 An editorial in another paper spoke in glowing terms of Douglas as "the genuine representative man of the age, the true embodiment of sound constitutional principles, the Western Jackson." In concluding this article, the editor argued that it was from the American people that Douglas claimed power rather than "from the office-holding rabble and plunderers of the treasury."10 The New Orleans True Delta reported that the announcement of Douglas' nomination "drove the masses of this city into a furor of exultation, such as never before occurred in New Orleans."11

New Orleans Crescent, as quoted in the Montgomery, Alabama, Confederation, July 14, 1860.

<sup>9</sup>June 30, 1860.

<sup>10</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping in Scrapbook, Jesse Turner MSS, Duke University Library.

<sup>11</sup> June 24, 1860, as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, June 29, 1860. The True Delta should not be confused with the New Orleans Daily Delta, which had greater circulation and supported Breckenridge during the campaign.

The Mobile, Alabama, Register declared Douglas' election "a foregone conclusion." In explanation of this statement, Forsyth reasoned: "If the deadly hatred of the Administration, ardently seconded by a host of zealous politicians, were unavailing to defeat him before the convention where the appliances of federal power are infinitely more potent than with the masses, how can it defeat him in an appeal to the thirty millions of his countrymen?" 12

Not all Southern reaction was so favorable. One editor in Georgia compared Douglas to Henry Clay in popularity but said that like Clay he would never be elected President. Though supporting the candidacy of Bell and Everett, the editor spoke in warm terms of Douglas: "Whatever be thought of the man, his character, or his principles, no one can doubt that he is popular with the masses everywhere, and especially in his own land. Thousands upon thousands of hearts respond to his every emotion as if irresistibly drawn to the lodestone rock." 13

Southern papers which supported Breckenridge and Lane were less kind in their estimates of Douglas. Several papers carried an account of Douglas' being hung in effigy in Wilson, North Carolina. The effigy had a placard on the back which read:

<sup>12</sup> As quoted in the Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, June 29, 1860.

<sup>13</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, June 24, 1860.

## STEPHEN ARNOLD DOUGLAS THE TRAITOR

SOUTH, THE UNION AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. 14

One example of the contempt in which anti-Douglas delegates to the convention regarded the Little Giant's nomination may be found in a speech given in Richmond by an Alabama delegate on his way back to his native state after the disruption at Baltimore. According to a newspaper report of the speech:

"In reviewing the course of Mr. Douglas, Mr. Scott endeavored to show that he [Douglas] was a Republican in disguise, and that he trampled alike on protection and the decisions of the Supreme Court." Someone asked Scott if he would prefer Seward to Douglas, and Scott "instantly replied that he would—that Mr. Seward was a statesman, a plain, honest, outspoken man, who meant what he said and said what he meant, and therefore was infinitely to be preferred to Douglas, who equivocated, mystified and deceived."

Response to Johnson's nomination was mostly confined to Georgia since he was better known in his home state and had not been in national politics for any length of time. In a letter to Stephens, Johnson wrote that "the principles & integrity of the National Democratic party were worth the sacrifice of myself, if need be for their maintenance." 16

<sup>14</sup> As reported in Raleigh, North Carolina, Standard, July 4, 1860.

<sup>15</sup> Charlotte, North Carolina, Whig, July 3, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, July 6, 1860, Johnson MSS.

Stephens was, however, mystified at Johnson's acceptance of such a hopeless nomination and wrote to a friend, "What Governor Johnson expects to accomplish [by accepting the nomination] I do not know."

One of Douglas' correspondents assured him, "Your associate, Gov. Johnson is well known to me and I do not hazard anything in pronouncing his nomination a judicious one. He is beloved and respected in Georgia and sustains as high a reputation as any gentleman in the South." A rather different picture of Johnson was given by Linton Stephens, who gave his brother an account of the convention proceedings which he had obtained from a Georgia delegate: "He says Johnson is a man of brains but that the devil of it is, he has got no manners and that he came all the way home from Washington without making a single friend on the road. He says, he is a damned bear, and seems to have a talent for driving people away from him." 19

Those opposed to the Douglas-Johnson nomination were free in their criticism of the vice-presidential candidate.

One letter published in a Georgia newspaper expressed regret at the fact that Johnson had accepted a place on a ticket doomed to defeat. "Governor Johnson will be voted against, . . . by

<sup>17</sup>Stephens to Dr. Z. P. Landrum, July 1, 1860, in War of the Rebellion Records, Series II, vol. II (Washington, D.C., 1897), 688.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas F. Hayes to Douglas, July 20, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>19</sup>Linton Stephens to Alexander H. Stephens, June 28, 1860, Stephens Convent MSS, Microfilm, Emory University.

as true friends, and warm admirers as public man ever had. . . We have a personal regret that we shall have to vote against a man whose high character and brilliant talents command our highest esteem. We shall do it with great reluctance and so will thousands of others, who in this case will sacrifice a warm partiality in their entire unwillingness to endorse, in the person of Mr. Douglas, the doctrine of the unqualified jurisdiction of the territorial governments over the question of slavery. m<sup>20</sup>

Those who had a history of opposition to Johnson in state politics were harsher in their criticism. Howell Cobb's son John wrote to his father gleefully telling of Johnson's first campaign speech being applauded only when the names of Breckenridge and Lane were mentioned. He told of Johnson's being hung in effigy and commented: "Johnson has found out from the reception given to him here that the people are not as much with him as he thought for [sic] and he feels it. . . . The people here feel sorry for Johnson & his presence creates the feeling like that of the corpse of some distinguished man was passing through the city."<sup>21</sup>

The Charleston <u>Mercury</u>, with its usual invective, pointed an accusing finger at Johnson and charged that "regardless of all the warm ties presumed to exist among Southren [<u>sic</u>] brethren and patriots, he received the offer of the scattering

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Unidentified newspaper clipping in Johnson MSS. Article signed "Telegraph."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>John Cobb to Howell Cobb, June 30, 1860, Cobb MSS.

misrepresenters of Southern opinion with coveted pleasure, and heartily responded to the proposition to play the second fiddle of Squattery in his sunny clime. "22 A Georgia paper speculated that Johnson would "be compelled to seek the retirement which can so well be spared him, and which he so deservedly merits."23

Besides personal animosities toward different candidates, problems were also present in the campaign because of the split in the Democratic party. The most basic question was which wing of the party was the true Democracy? Two groups, both of whom claimed to be right, yet preaching opposite doctrines, could not equally represent the Democratic party. Stemming from this question was the further one of which set of Democratic candidates held the authentic nomination? And finally after the split in the party only one faction had access to the financial resources of the party.

Most Democrats solved the question of true doctrine and authenticity quite simply by choosing to claim the right for whichever wing of the party they agreed with more closely. Some, however, were more honest in their answers to these problems. Though admitting a preference for the candidacy of Breckenridge, President Buchanan was one of those who contended that neither nomination was binding on any Democrat. In a speech from the portico of the White House a few weeks after the rupture of the Baltimore convention, Buchanan addressed a

Washington dispatch, June 26, in Charleston Mercury, June 29, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Columbus, Georgia, <u>Daily Sun</u>, June 28, 1860.

crowd which had assembled there. In discussing the authenticity of the nominations he said: "If the convention which nominated Mr. Douglas was not a regular Democratic convention, it must be confessed that Breckenridge is in the same condition in that respect. The convention that nominated mim, although it was composed of nearly all the certain Democratic States, did not contain the two-thirds; and therefore every Democrat is at perfect liberty to vote as he thinks proper, without running counter to any regular nomination of the party." Most Democrats, however, refused to accept the premise that neither nomination was binding and claimed for the candidate of their choice the rightful nomination and declared the other an imposter.

Some of those who supported Douglas' candidacy argued that the authenticity of Douglas' nomination was the only reason for their support of him. A letter published in the Raleigh Weekly Standard and signed "A Friend to the Continuance of the Union" listed the arguments in favor of Douglas' candidacy and stated that on the grounds of party regularity he would vote for Douglas. That this position was one of principle rather than personal preference was obvious from the concluding sentence. "I will admit more—that were their respective

Duchanan, X, 459. This same sentiment was expressed by Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia in a letter to Linton Stephens, July 27, 1860, Joseph E. Brown Papers, Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia; and by Robert Toombs in a speech at Warrenton, Georgia as reported in Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, August 2, 1860.

positions changed I would vote for Breckenridge and Lane with more hearty good will than I expect to vote for Douglas and Johnson."

A North Carolinian sent a letter to the executive committee of the state Democratic Party resigning his place as an elector on the Douglas ticket because he felt the cause of Douglas in the state and the nation hopeless and he thought that to continue the ticket would only throw North Carolina to Bell. In spite of this action, however, he admitted in the letter: "I look upon the Douglas wing as the only party now with any claims to nationality." 26

A somewhat different view was given in a letter to Douglas from a supporter in Arkansas. He informed Douglas that there was as yet no Douglas-Johnson ticket in his state and that those who claimed to be Democratic electors "will cast the vote of Arkansas for Breckenridge and Lane. This, if it was the will of the voters would be well enough, but I am unwilling to admit such to be the fact."

Another Douglas supporter proposed a different argument to prove the authenticity of the nomination. "Majorities never secede; and as the majority who maintain their position and place can only be regarded as the original body, we claim that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>July 18, 1860.

<sup>26</sup> Letter of G. W. Blount to the Chairman of the Executive Committee (Douglas Democrats), September 21, 1860. Printed in Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, October 3, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>Joseph T. Fisher to Douglas, July 13, 1860, Douglas MSS.

we alone are right and our nominee the only true one. #28 similar sentiment was expressed in a letter to the editor in the Raleigh Weekly Standard: "The friends of Judge Douglas do not admit that the party is broken up and has no regular nominee. The "Seceders" are trying to break it up, because they hate Judge Douglas, who has refused to unite in their disunion plans. . . . I shall stand by the regular nominee, for weal or for woe!"29 A Douglas elector from Virginia declared: "Regarding Stephen A. Douglas as the regular nominee of the regular Democratic National Convention. I shall support his nomination most willingly and cordially. . . . It is my pride that I have always been with my party, in its defeats as well as triumphs. And now, that its difficulties and dangers are greater than ever, I mean to evince my devotion to its principles and its integrity by the best services I can render it, whether I be with a majority or a minority in the end."30

Alexander Stephens expressed surprise to a friend who had questioned him about which Democratic candidate he would support. "I didn't think it necessary to say to you as a private citizen I shall stand by the national flag of Non Intervention so long as it floats; in whoseever's hand it may be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Speech of Dr. C. J. Fox, at Democratic (Douglas) convention, Raleigh, North Carolina, as quoted in Raleigh, North Carolina, <u>Standard</u>, September 5, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Signed "Anti-Disorganizer," August 29, 1860.

<sup>30</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping quoting Henry L. Hopkins of Virginia, found in Jesse Turner Scrapbook, Manuscript Collection, Duke University Library.

committed."31

A Georgia paper supporting Bell's candidacy declared the Douglas wing of the Democracy to be the legitimate one.

"The Douglas party has more semblance of regularity and of nationality, wastly more ability and experience in the ticket, and equally trustworthy men for Southern support. Take it all in all, it has undoubtedly more claims upon the Democratic voters in every section of the Union, and it will poll a larger vote." 32

Even among those who supported the Breckenridge-Lane nominations, there were reservations expressed concerning them. The Charleston Mercury, perhaps the most extreme Southern Rights paper, grudgingly admitted the authenticity of Douglas' candidacy. "Douglas and his friends are right in affirming that they were in possession of the regular organization of the Democratic party in Convention; but they are wrong in maintaining that, therefore, their frauds and trickeries ought to be tolerated."

The Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel accused the seceders of being untrue to their principle "by putting in nomination candidates who, heretofore at least, have as fully committed themselves to the doctrine of popular Sovereignty as Judge Douglas." Governor Brown of Georgia indicated that

<sup>31</sup> Stephens to J. P. Hambleton, July 7, 1860, J. P. Hambleton Papers, Emory University Library.

<sup>32</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, July 7, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup>July 10, 1860.

Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, undated clipping in Douglas MSS.

he would vote for Breckenridge because he thought the Southern Democracy would generally support him, but at the same time Brown condemned "the action of the wire workers who produced the split more for the gratification of selfish motives and vindictive feelings than from patriotic emotions." An editor in Virginia declared that he would support Breckenridge and Lane only because "the manner in which [Douglas] was finally nominated will weaken, if not overthrow his strength at the North." 36

A Douglas paper in Georgia complained of the tactics of the Breckenridge Democrats. "The opponents of Judge Douglas are attempting to play the old Whig game of brag and bluff by manifesting a most tyranical and intolerent spirit. Such a disposition is always a sure index of a weak cause, and the involuntary outpourings of that conceitedness, which is invariably the forerunner of defeat." 37

Another editor criticized Breckenridge for accepting a place on the seceders' ticket. "The most surprising thing is how Mr. Breckenridge ever permitted himself to be inveigled into an acceptance of such a nomination. . . . It is strange how he came to suffer himself to be used as a tool by the

<sup>35</sup>Brown to Linton Stephens, July 27, 1860, Brown MSS.

Culpepper, C. H., Virginia, Republican as quoted in Richmond Enquirer, July 3, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup>Atlanta, Georgia, Confederacy, June 29, 1860 as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, July 2, 1860.

Disunionists! And it is only as a tool that they use him."38

Nevertheless the majority of papers in the cotton states as well as a good number in the border states supported the candidacy of Breckenridge and Lane. Those who were uncomfortable about the authenticity of the nomination simply hid behind the excuse that neither nomination was binding and then supported the Breckenridge wing. Some editors were forced to change allegiance from Douglas to Breckenridge in the middle of the campaign or face the loss of the paper due to cancellation of subscriptions and dearth of advertising. 39

Members of the convention which nominated Douglas recognized that they would enter the campaign under the dual handicap of an opposing faction and candidate within the party, as well as that of the concentrated strength of the Republican party in the more populous states of the North. In an effort to minimize these problems the members of the new National Democratic Committee were carefully chosen to gather as much strength to the Douglas cause as possible. The new committeemen, at Douglas' request, elected August Belmont, a New York financier, as their chairman.

A Southern paper which supported Breckenridge asserted that Douglas was several hundred thousand dollars in debt to Belmont, the New York partner in the House of Rothschilds, and

<sup>38</sup> Unidentified newspaper clipping in Jesse Turner Scrapbook, hand dated Washington, D. C., July 19, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>Reynolds, <u>Editors Make War</u>, 66-69. Also see the Appendix in this volume which shows the numerical strength of the Breckenridge press in the South.

that Belmont's support of Douglas at Charleston and Baltimore was merely a ruse through which Belmont expected peculiar favor to be shown him by the Douglas administration. 40 Evidence seems to indicate, however, that such an explanation was oversimplified. Belmont had been a strong supporter of Buchanan until mid-1859 when his request for the post of ambassador to Spain had been not only denied by the President but totally ignored. In retaliation Belmont turned to the support of Douglas, Buchanan's most formidable opponent and the likely Democratic candidate for the 1860 nomination. In September, 1859, Belmont had opened a Douglas national headquarters in New York City and for the next nine months had worked to promote Douglas'candidacy. In that time he "had gained the respect of many seasoned politicians for his organizing ability, his immense energy, his unswerving loyalty to the Douglas standard, and his efforts to diminish intraparty friction."41

At the close of the Baltimore convention Belmont returned to New York and set about the business of raising funds for the campaign. He began by making a contribution of \$1,000 from his own pocket. Other money, however, failed to be

<sup>40</sup> Augusta, Georgia, <u>Dispatch</u> as quoted in Savannah, Georgia, <u>Daily Morning News</u>, June 27, 1860. See also letter of C. H. Winder to Buchanan, July 7, 1860, Buchanan MSS. This letter makes the same accusation in some detail.

<sup>(</sup>New York, 1968), 56-61, 64-74, quote, 74. Hereafter cited as Katz, Belmont. A testimony to Belmont's real devotion to the Douglas cause was given in a letter of Edward C. West, one of Douglas' staunchest supporters in New York, in a letter to Douglas in which he wrote, "you have Belmont, heart and judgment." April 16, 1860, Douglas MSS.

given to the cause in spite of the fact that the previous year Belmont had been able to raise a considerable sum from New York merchants to aid the Democratic state campaigns in New Hampshire and Connecticut. Several explanations of the turn about were suggested by him in a letter to Douglas. One was that after the breakup of the Democratic party, the election of Lincoln was virtually certain and to put money into so hopeless a cause was unwise. Another explanation was that New York merchants felt that if they contributed to Douglas! cause they would offend their Southern customers and that this was an unwise business risk. Still a third explanation was that after all the money put into the state campaigns the previous year to no apparent effect, donors were hesitant to give more in a similar cause. 42

In a letter to Miles Taylor of Louisiana, the chairman of the Douglas Congressional Campaign Committee, Belmont complained that his request for \$100 from the Democrats of each Congressional district had failed to produce even one dollar for the general campaign fund. "It is impossible for me to go on in this way—if the other members of the Committee will not assist me in obtaining funds, the whole machinery has to stop." Taylor was not convinced of the hopelessness of the financial situation and in a letter to Douglas accused Belmont of "want

<sup>42</sup> August Belmont to Douglas, July 28, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>43</sup>Belmont to Taylor as quoted by Taylor in a letter to Douglas, July 29, 1860, <u>Tbid</u>.

of attachment to the cause in which he is ostensibly embarked, and that he is disposed to play into the hands of those from whom he appears to have been for some time alienated." After telling Douglas that he had written to a friend in New York concerning the possibility of raising funds independently of Belmont, Taylor further accused Belmont: "It will not do to have our chances of success in the contest now going on, diminished by the incapacity, inefficiency or worse of the head of our Finance Committee."

Douglas had received a lengthy letter from Belmont just the day before he received Taylor's and was not convinced of Belmont's having been remiss in doing his best as head of the finance committee. After Taylor wrote his letter he went to New York to confer with Belmont and was then convinced that he had misjudged the difficulties which Belmont and his committee faced. In a later letter to Douglas, Taylor admitted his mistake and assured Douglas that Belmont was "as sincere in the maintenance of the good cause as I am myself." 45

Convinced that financial strength for the party was not going to materialize, Belmont proposed that Douglas come and take the stump on his own behalf in New York, "speaking at different points throughout the State." Belmont admitted that his proposal was "not in accordance with what has hitherto been

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Taylor to Douglas, August 13, 1860, Douglas MSS; Katz, Belmont, 78-79. This volume contains the best account available on the financial problems of the Douglas campaign.

considered customary in Presidential campaigns." In defense of the plan, however, he reasoned that "the reckless conduct of the administration & of your enemies render exceptional exertions on our side necessary."

When September elections for state offices in New England showed the real strength of the Republicans, Belmont redoubled his earlier efforts to run a fusion ticket where Douglas, Breckenridge and Bell electors would combine on a single slate to defeat Lincoln. According to this plan the electors would be bound to vote for whichever of the three candidates could with a united vote defeat Lincoln. 47 Various forms of this fusion plan had been talked about from the onset of the campaign.

Douglas himself was friendly to the idea of fusion with the Bell supporters since he considered that the Constitutional Union party offered acceptable principles to the people: "We should treat the Bell & Everett men friendly and cultivate good relations with them, for they are Union men." Toward fusion with the Breckenridge Democrats, however, Douglas was adamant. As early as July 4th he declared in a letter to the editor of the St. Louis Republican: "Any Compromise with the Secessionists would be ruinous. An amalgamation tickett with the bolters

<sup>46</sup> Belmont to Douglas, July 28, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>47</sup>Katz, Belmont, 80-83.

Douglas to Nathaniel Paschall, July 4, 1860, Letters,

would disgust the people & give every Northern State to Lincoln."49

With Douglas' approval of limited fusion early in the campaign, efforts were made in many of the states to effect such plans, but they succeeded in only a few. Election results showed that no number of fusion tickets would have defeated Lincoln, but of course that became known only by hindsight.

Many who opposed the election of Lincoln sincerely thought that fusion tickets would have a chance of defeating Lincoln at least in the electoral college and that should the election then be thrown into the House, that it would be impossible for a Republican to be elected there.

Two variants of the fusion plan existed. One advocated the withdrawal of Douglas, Bell, and Breckenridge and the naming of a new candidate agreed upon by all three parties. Though it was reported that both Bell and Breckenridge were willing to accept this plan, there is no ewidence in Bell's correspondence that he was. Then, too, Douglas was totally opposed to the plan. According to Jefferson Davis, who claimed to have encouraged all three candidates to accept the plan, Douglas told him it was "impracticable, because his friends, mainly Northern Democrats, if he were withdrawn, would join in support of Mr. Lincoln, rather than of any one that should supplant him (Douglas); that he was in the hands of his friends, and was

<sup>49</sup> Douglas to Charles H. Lanphier, July 5, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>., 498. All errors appear in original.

sure they would not accept the proposition. "50

A second proposal suggested that Breckenridge and Douglas not run against each other in any state. It was generally conceded that Douglas was stronger in the North and Breckenridge in the South. Therefore if Douglas could run unopposed in the North, he might carry enough states to prevent the election of Lincoln and thus throw the election into the House of Representatives where the Democratic party would have control. With Breckenridge running in the South unopposed by Douglas it was hoped that Bell might be deprived of electoral votes there. 51

The difficulty with this plan was that, just as the two wings of the party could not agree in convention, neither could they agree now on which states were certain for which candidate. Breckenridge supporters not only wanted all the Southern states but also claimed Pennsylvania and New Jersey as certain, and besides, they felt they had an equal chance in the other Northern states. Similarly, Douglas' followers refused to admit that their candidate could not win at least some of the Southern states, especially Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana. In addition, Douglas would never concede that Breckenridge's candidacy had any legitimacy and refused all cooperation with him. So, not surprisingly, this plan too, was never put into operation. 52

<sup>50</sup> Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (London, 1881), 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Issac Rynders to Buchanan, June, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>52</sup> James Hammond to an unidentified correspondent, July 4, 1860, Hammond MSS.

With Douglas' rejection of these last two plans, the only one which received serious attention was that of running joint electoral tickets in those states where it seemed plain that without fusion Lincoln would certainly win, or where the vote among the three anti-Republican candidates would be so divided as to deprive any of them of a majority (especially in the South). Since Douglas refused to consider fusion with the Breckenridge camp, most of the efforts to achieve some kind of cooperative arrangement were limited to fusion with the Constitutional Union party candidates Bell and Everett.

In defense of the refusal to join with the Breckenridge Democrats the Douglas Democratic executive committee issued a letter in mid-July explaining its position on this question.

The Democratic party, as a national party, stands now where it has stood for years, upon the ground of nonintervention. . . . Those who seceded from the Baltimore Convention did so because they were unwilling to stand on that ground. They have again and again repudiated that principle, and . . . declared that they would sever their connection with the majority of the delegates assembled in convention . . . unless they, too, would solemnly repudiate it in obedience to their demand. Under these circumstances it is clear . . . that if the antagonism between the seceders and a majority of the Democratic Convention was such that the seceders could no longer take part in their deliberations, and were constrained to set up candidates in opposition to those selected by the majority, that antagonism still continues, and is such as must exclude the possibility of any union between them in the support of a common electoral ticket.53

The refusal of the Douglasites to fuse with the supporters of Breckenridge was matched, at least in some circles,

<sup>53</sup> Letter of Chairman of the Democratic executive committee, printed in Charleston Mercury, July 10, 1860.

by a similar attitude on the opposite side. New York's former senator, Daniel S. Dickinson, leader of the state's "Hards" who supported the Administration wrote to Buchanan: "There must be no patchwork—no halving electoral tickets with either Douglass of Lincoln."54

Fusion efforts between the Bell and Douglas forces were received cordially by both sides. Bell's campaign manager, in a letter to Douglas, assured him that "Mr. Bell is pleased with the evidence of good feeling now existing and is anxious for the success of your ticket, if his own cannot be elected."55

Nashville, Tennessee, at the home of Henry S. Foote, a Douglas supporter who afterwards declared that the meeting was a "friendly and almost fraternal interview." <sup>56</sup> Bell, like Douglas, supported the fusion of the two electoral tickets. The details of such a plan, he told a reporter of the New York Herald, he would leave to his friends so long as they did not abandon principle. <sup>57</sup>

Perhaps the most important fusion effort took place in New York which had such a large electoral vote. At first the plan was to include only the Bell and Douglas electors, but after the Republican victories in early fall elections the plan

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Dickinson to Buchanan, June 30, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>55</sup>Blanton Duncan to Douglas, August 14, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup>Foote, <u>War of the Rebellion</u>, 275.

<sup>57</sup> August 8, 1860, as cited by Joseph Parks, John Bell of Tennessee (Baton Rouge, 1950), 369.

was enlarged to include Breckenridge electors. Over Douglas' protests such a fusion ticket was arranged with 18 Douglas electors, 10 Bell electors, and 7 Breckenridge electors. A few days after the fusion was arranged Douglas and Johnson appeared at an immense rally in New York City, where Douglas continued to denounce fusion with the seceders. Howell Cobb gave his assessment of the situation in a letter to a fellow Georgian when he wrote: "In New York our friends begin to talk confidently of carrying that state. They might have done it if they had made their fusion ticket in the right spirit—but both Douglas & Johnson were there doing all in their power to prevent it—and whilst they could not defeat the fusion—they got up such a bad feeling as to prevent that cordial cooperation which was necessary to ensure success."59

The only other states in the North where fusion tickets were run were in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania. In the last named state, however, the Breckenridge men managed to get a majority of places on the slate. 60

In almost all of the border and cotton states there were efforts at Douglas-Bell fusion slates in an effort to defeat Breckenridge and thus prove that loyalty to the Union was still the primary concern of the majority of Southerners. Though much talk and effort went into the plan, it was

<sup>58</sup>Katz, Belmont, 81.

<sup>59</sup> Howell Cobb to James Madison Spurlock, September 25, 1860, Spurlock MSS.

<sup>60</sup>Katz, Belmont, 83.

successful only in Texas where its significance was minimal since Breckenridge possessed great strength there, as evidenced by the election results which gave Breckenridge a three-to-one edge over the fusion ticket.

In the border states Tell's supporters expected to win a clear majority and so were unwilling to work very hard at fusion. Nevertheless, as the campaign progressed newspapers which supported Bell became more and more complimentary in their comments on Douglas, even running letters favoring his election. As the main objective of both the Douglasites and the Bell men became primarily the preservation of the Union as the election of Lincoln became more certain, it was in the interests of both parties to cooperate at least in some measure. 61

In the deep South the Douglas forces in Florida,
Mississippi, and Arkansas were so weak that the issue of fusion
between the Douglas and Bell parties was an insignificant or
non-existent one. In South Carolina there was not yet popular
election of presidential electors so the campaign was mostly
one of praise for Breckenridge, the known preference of South
Carolina legislators, and of arguments favoring secession should
Lincoln be elected. Privately many despaired of Breckenridge's
election and looked forward to an independent Southern confederacy following Lincoln's victory. 62

<sup>61</sup> Reynolds, Editors Make War, 82-83.

<sup>62</sup> Crenshaw, Slave States, 211-217.

In both Louisiana and Alabama there was talk of fusion between the Bell and Douglas parties, and some efforts accompanied the talk. In both states the Bell conventions, when meeting to choose electors, passed resolutions favorable to Douglas should it appear that his cause rather than Bell's could defeat Breckenridge and possibly Lincoln. The Louisiana resolution read in part: "If as we advance towards the ides of November it appears that Mr. Douglas stands what's called a 'better Chance' then we shall have to do for him and his friends what they will have the generosity to do for the Union candidate, if in the course of events it becomes necessary." 63

In a letter to Buchanan, Slidell indicated the problem faced by the Bell and Douglas parties in attempting fusion.

"There is much talk of fusion between the Bell and Douglas parties," Slidell reported, and, "if made openly I think that we [Breckenridge supporters] should gain more than they by the operation & if attempted secretly it can hardly be so successful as seriously to endanger our success."

In Georgia the fusion effort had the support both of Johnson on the Democratic side and of state senator Benjamin H. Hill, the most influential supporter of Bell in the state. In a letter to Alexander H. Stephens, Johnson expressed his approval of the plan but not without reservation: "It is believed that

<sup>63</sup>As quoted from the Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, August 2, 1860, in McLure, "The Elections of 1860 in Louisiana," 601-702; Alabama State Sentinel, October 24, 1860.

<sup>64</sup>October 23, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

this arrangement will carry the state and disappoint <u>pro tanto</u> the Seismatic [<u>sic</u>] Scheme of the Seceders: and strengthen Douglas in his fight with Lincoln. I can't say how it will work; but our friends of Macon say the arrangement can be consummated." A correspondent commented in a letter to Johnson: "We will not lose anything by that arrangement [fusion] and may gain five votes for Douglas." In assigning the reason for his support of fusion, the writer explained that, "In any event, the good of the country requires, that the secessionists and protectionists should be defeated in this state."

From two of his staunchest supporters in Georgia, Douglas received letters concerning the fusion efforts. A state politician told Douglas in mid-July that "there is growing sentiment in favor of a combination with Bell & Everett and I do not hesitate to say that I am in favor of the project as by that means we will get five votes for you and without it the ten go to the Fire Eaters." The letter continued, however, by expressing an unusual reservation concerning the plan: "This last proposition will not be entertained if we can get your consent to come among us, but if you cannot come we shall make the best arrangements we can."

James Gardner, the publisher of the Augusta <u>Daily</u>

<u>Constitutionalist</u>, was less optimistic concerning the plan-and

<sup>65</sup> July 20, 1860, Johnson MSS.

<sup>66</sup>Hiram Warner to Johnson, July 22, 1860, Ibid.

 $<sup>^{67}\</sup>text{W}$ . K. de Graffenreid to Douglas, July 16, 1860, Douglas MSS.

perhaps more realistic. In a letter to Douglas dated only a few days after the above, Gardner observed: "The plan of a Union ticket with the Bell and Everett men of which I wrote in my last is not practicable—at least such seems the prospect." In explaining this estimate Gardner gave two reasons: "Neither side seems willing to make any concession as to platform . . . . Many very influential men favor it but a sufficient number oppose it violently to check further efforts in that direction." In the paper which Gardner owned, an editorial assigned still another reason against fusion: "We are pretty well satisfied that a union of Bell and Douglas men would result in a pretty general stampede from both sides, to Breckenridge." For these reasons, then, fusion was never effected in Georgia and the state's electoral vote went to Breckenridge.

In an article summarizing the various efforts at fusion North and South, a New York Herald editorial concluded:

It will thus be seen that our political parties, here, there, and everywhere, are inexplicably mixed up, and that the various elements opposed to Lincoln are fighting more violently against each other than against the common enemy. . . . But the end is not yet. We are only approaching the beginning of the end; for the indications of the day are that this revolutionary condition of parties is but the prelude to the most tremendous revolutionary events. 70

The <u>Herald's</u> pessimism grew out of a candid recognition of the two major issues of the campaign. Basic to all four

<sup>68</sup> Gardner to Douglas, July 20, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>69</sup> Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, October 27, 1860.

<sup>70</sup> As quoted in Charleston Mercury, August 20, 1860.

presidential candidates and the parties which stood behind them was the answer each gave to the question of Congressional power over slavery in the territories. Republicans claimed that this power was such that Congress could exclude slavery upon the initial organization of the territories. Brockenridge Democrats took the diametrically opposite position that Congress not only had no power to exclude slavery from the territories but that Congress was empowered to protect slave property in the territories as well as obliged to do so. Douglas Democrats took a middle ground by denying to Congress any power in the matter and claiming that the right to decide the status of slavery in a territory was exclusively vested in the settlers in the territory. The Constitutional Union party was silent on the specific question and only called for the upholding of the Constitution and the preservation of the Union.

The second great issue in the campaign was related to the first: what recourse did a state have if its people felt that their rights had not been recognized by the federal government? Most Southerners, regardless of party, claimed that the ultimate recourse of a state against what it regarded as a fundamentally improper action of the federal government was secession from the Union. This was based on the idea that the state had freely joined the Union and could, through the will of the majority of its sovereign people, sever its connection with the Union. Within the South this issue had finally become one which was beyond debate, and the only question concerned the reasons whereby secession might be justified. As the

campaign progressed, the controversy over this last point more and more centered around the question of whether or not Lincoln's election alone could be proper grounds for secession, or whether it would not be necessary and prudent to wait for an overt act of his administration contrary to the interests of the South.

Around these issues, then, much of the rhetoric of the campaign centered. Supporters of each party, in their speeches and writings, tried to win others to its point of view. As the weeks passed the lines became more clearly drawn, and it became more apparent that the time for compromise and rational solution of differences was running out.

Southerners who rejected Douglas' solution to the question of slavery in the territories claimed that it was only a thinly veiled way to accomplish the Republican objective of excluding slavery from all new territories. A Breckenridge newspaper in Virginia declared that should the American people approve of Douglas' squatter sovereignty by electing him to the presidency, it "would forever exclude the Southern people with their property from the Territories, and be as degrading to the South as the triumph of the principles of Black Republicanism." The article ended by pronouncing the principle "a short cut to all the ends of Abolitionism."

Southerners who supported Douglas' candidacy reminded their opponents that until recently virtually everyone in the South had been united on the principle enunciated by Douglas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup>Petersburg, Virginia, <u>Bulletin</u>, as quoted in Charlotte, North Carolina, <u>Whig</u>, August 21, 1860. Italicized in the original.

A letter which appeared in a North Carolina paper friendly to Douglas asserted: "If Mr. Douglas is wrong, all of you, as well as a large majority of the Northern Democracy, have up to this time been wrong with him. Is it not passing strange, that what you have all heretofore considered extremely right, should become extremely wrong so suddenly? For many years, and until yesterday, Congressional interference with slavery you all declared to be wrong. To-day you are called on to say it is so right that the man who still maintains it to be wrong is to be pronounced a heretic and excommunicate."<sup>72</sup>

In a speech in Augusta, Georgia, Douglas' running-mate, Johnson, pointed out that what the Breckenridge Democrats and the Republicans were contending for was virtually the same thing, namely, Congressional intervention with slavery in the territories. A letter to the editor of the Daily Constitutionalist raised the question: "Can there be any hope for peace and the Union, if the Breckenridge or secession party succeed in November next? They demand what they can never obtain, and what they, until recently, declared they did not want, the enactment of a 'slave code' by Congress in the Territories." 74

<sup>72</sup> Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, July 18, 1860. The letter was signed "A Friend to the Continuance of the Union."

<sup>73</sup> Speech of Herschel Johnson delivered in Augusta, Georgia, August 7, 1860, as quoted in <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, August 9, 1860.

 $<sup>^{74}</sup>$ Letter signed "Sidney" in <u>Ibid</u>., July 27, 1860.

An Arkansas supporter of Douglas' wrote to him requesting documents which would show Breckenridge's inconsistency on the question of non-intervention. "If I have the documents I know I can establish the fact--from the record--that you are a better southern man than him--the' he lives in a slave and you in a free state," the Arkansan declared. "What I wish is to be able to meet the advocates of Mr. Bell and the Southern Sectionals & Disunion nominees on their own grounds, and convict them before the people of humbugging and the most gross inconsistency--and which if I have the 'papers' I know I can do." Another supporter expressed the opinion that "whether you [Douglas] are chosen or not, the agitating question can be stilled on no other principle than the one you propose--non-intervention by Congress."

Douglas men were quick to point out the change which they alleged had recently occurred in what Breckenridge claimed to be his principles. Both Douglas and Bell newspapers quoted the Vice-President's speech made in Lexington, Kentucky, shortly after the election of 1856. "The whole power of the Democratic organization is pledged to the following propositions: That Congress shall not intervene upon that subject [slavery] in the States, in the Territories . . .; that the people of each Territory shall determine the question for themselves, without discrimination on account of the allowance or prohibition of

<sup>75</sup>B. F. Hemstead to Douglas, July 13, 1860; D. C. Humphreys to Douglas, November 3, 1860, Douglas MSS.

slavery."<sup>76</sup> A Bell paper claimed that "Democrats see very plainly that as between Douglas & Breckenridge, there is no choice—the latter is as deep in the mire as the other, & fully as much committed to Squatter Sovereignty."<sup>77</sup>

Some Douglas Democrats further charged that the nomination of Breckenridge and Lane was "the result of a premeditated and treasonable plan, on the part of certain men, the acknowledged leaders of the organization, to denationalize the Democratic party, and thereby dissolve the Union." In answering this charge, a paper which supported Breckenridge and Lane condemned Yancey "for his agency at Charleston in commencing the dissolution of the national Democratic party." And it declared further: "Mr. Yancey does not represent Breckenridge and Lane. They are not responsible for his antecendents or his present views."

Breckenridge Democrats made their own charges against the Douglas Democrats. They presented evidence which attempted to show that Johnson held principles different from those of Douglas. In a speech delivered at the opening of the campaign, Johnson had stated: "If the South shall persist in the policy which she has inaugurated, unwisely, as I think, until the

<sup>76</sup> As quoted in an unidentified newspaper clipping, John A. Logan MSS.

<sup>77</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, July 6, 1860.

<sup>78</sup> Letter of G. W. Blount, September 21, 1860. Printed in Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, October 3, 1860.

<sup>79</sup>Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, October 31, 1860.

country shall be forced into two great sectional lines, I shall be recreant to the instincts of my heart, if I did not link my destiny with hers, and follow her fortunes for weal or for woe."80 The expression of such sentiments led one writer to label Douglas and Johnson "Strange Bedfellows."81

A quotation from a Breckenridge newspaper shows the tone which Johnson's rivals used in pointing out the inconsistencies in the Douglas ticket: "Mr. H. V. Johnson, the Squatter nominee for Vice President holds that the South has a right to Congressional legislation to protect slave property in the territories, but is opposed to the policy of demanding it. Douglas, in his <a href="Harper">Harper</a> article, says, 'no one who admits the South to protection in the territories can refuse to demand it without being false to his obligations to support the Constitution.' Herschel got a pretty hard knock over the knuckles there. If he has any sensibility, he must feel rather uncomfortable in being upon the same ticket with a man who has pronounced him false to his obligations to support the Constitution."

 $<sup>^{80}</sup>$ Unidentified newspaper clipping, Johnson MSS.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Columbus, Georgia, Weekly Times, July 13, 1860. Johnson's position is taken from his letter to the editor of the Albany, Georgia, Patriot, May 28, 1860 on the question of what the Georgia Democracy should do after the rupture of the Charleston Convention. The Harper's article referred to is the one in which Douglas explained his position in regard to slavery in the territories, September, 1869. See above, Chapter III, pp. 66f.

During the campaign Johnson was occasionally accused by the Breckenridge Democrats of being a disunionist. Such accusations were based on his past record, especially in 1850, as well as on expressions in his speeches during the canvass. In 1851 he had written, "The right of secession must be maintained. It is the last, the only hope of the South." The next sentence, however, showed that he saw preservation of the right of secession as a means of keeping the Union intact, not as a road to disunion. "Let us maintain it with unanimity, and we can hold in check the spirit of abolition." It must be remembered that at that time, no one had any chance of political office or influence in Georgia, or anywhere in the South, if he flatly denied the right of secession.

It is true that during the summer of 1860 phrases which could be plucked out of context and made to seem disunionist in tone were often present in Johnson's speeches, especially during his northern tour. It is necessary, however, to know the way in which these references to secession were made and the motives which inspired them. Frequently, if not always, they appeared next to expressions of devotion to the Union and were meant to arouse the people of the North to a realization of the seriousness of the situation at the South.

One example of secession sentiment appearing next to that of devotion to the Union was Johnson's speech in New York

<sup>83</sup> Letter of Johnson to Messrs White, et al., August 30, 1851. Unidentified newspaper clipping in Johnson MSS. This clipping is an 1860 reprint labeling Johnson as a secessionist.

when he appeared at the rally with Douglas. He said in part:
"I stand in the presence of an anti-slavery audience, and I represent a slavery people. I am intensely identified with and attached to the institutions of my section. And I love the Union, too; but I tell you there must be a spirit of forbearance, there must be mutual confidence between the people of these States, or you cannot preserve this Union."

The following words could have been uttered by Douglas since they expressed his formula for preserving the Union. They were, however, written by Johnson: "I believe that non-intervention by Congress, on the subject of slavery in the territories [is] the only principle upon which the agitation could be quieted and the Union saved; the very best basis of Compromise, on which the North and South could harmonize and live in peace."

As in other political campaigns, certain things that Johnson said were quoted out of context. Shortly after Johnson's Northern tour began, one Southerner commented on the "curious coincidence" that Johnson and Douglas made speeches on the same day in two different places, and they were, he alleged, "utterly, radically and hopelessly different in views." Had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup>Unidentified newspaper clipping, Johnson MSS.

<sup>85</sup> Letter of Johnson to John P. Jeffries, Wooster, Ohio, December 28, 1860, in unidentified newspaper clipping, Johnson MSS.

<sup>86</sup> Letter of Charles Winder to William Winder, September 24, 1860, in War of the Rebellion Records, II, 723-724.

there been such basic differences between the political views of the two candidates, however, Douglas would certainly not have accepted Johnson as a running mate.

In answer to those who claimed such differences in principle between Douglas and Johnson, the <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u> ran excerpts from the two candidates' speeches and writings for several days. 87 A sample quotation from each will reveal the similarity of their thinking, and it might be well to see the two in juxtaposition:

## DOUGLAS

Of all the mad schemes that ever could be devised by the South, or by the enemies of the South, that which recognizes the right of Congress to touch the institution of slavery either in States or Territories, beyond the single case provided in the Constitution for the rendition of fugitive slaves, is the most fatal.

### **JOHNSON**

It is better for the South to rely upon the Constitution and the Dred Scott case than to go before a freesoil Congress with the vain demand for its friendly interposition. When the lamb can trust to the lion for protection, then may the South ask Congress to throw over slavery a sheltering aegis.

Related to the question of slavery in the territories was that of state versus federal rights. On this issue the South generally adopted the position that slavery was a fundamental right in which the federal government could not constitutionally interfere except for the protection of the peculiar institution. Frightened by the increased population and prosperity of the North, the Southern spokesmen threatened to dissolve the Union if their rights were not protected by the general government. This was not a new weapon in Southern

<sup>87</sup> Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, September 19, 1860.

politics.

At least since the time of the South Carolina nullification crisis during Andrew Jackson's presidency, the question of the right of a state to secede from the Union had been discussed in the South and by 1860 there was general agreement in that section on the abstract principle involved. What was not universally agreed upon was the practical question of when that right should be exercised or on what grounds. Some extremists, such as William Yancey and Robert B. Rhett, Jr., the editor of the Charleston Mercury, seemed by the 1860's to be working to find reasons for secession. They adopted the setting up of an independent Southern confederacy as their goal. At the other end of the spectrum were those like Alexander H. Stephens and Herschel Johnson who accepted the right of secession but also sincerely loved the Union and thought all constitutional means should be used to preserve it. Southerners who agreed with them saw the doctrine of secession more as a tool to be used to achieve fair treatment from the North which possessed a clear majority in the Union. Between these two extremes were many shades of attachment to the Union and desire for secession.

In 1860 the practical question over which the secession arguments raged was whether or not the election of Lincoln, the leader of the "Black Republicans," was a sufficient cause of and by itself for disunion. 88 Some argued that it was; some

<sup>88</sup> For example: letter of James L. Orr of South Carolina to John Martin, et al., July 23, 1860 as quoted in Lillian Kibler, Ben F. Perry. South Carolina Unionist (Durham, 1946), 324.

even declared that his inauguration should be resisted by force. 89 Others argued that the South should wait for an overt act on the part of the Lincoln administration, an act which infringed on Southern rights. 90 These most favorable to the preservation of the Union argued that no man who could be elected President of the United States desired to antagonize any section and that Lincoln would almost certainly be conciliatory to the South after his election. 91 Still others argued that without Republican control of the Senate and House of Representatives, there would be little that Lincoln could do against the South even if he should so desire. 92

Towards the end of July the <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>
published excerpts from the speeches and writings of several
prominent Southern leaders urging immediate secession upon the
election of Lincoln. Among those quoted were Governors Madison
Perry of Florida, Andrew Moore of Alabama and John J. Pettus of
Mississippi as well as Jeferson Davis and, of course, William
Yancey. An example from a speech of Davis' will suffice to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup>A. H. Stephens to Linton Stephens, October 15, 1860, Convent MSS. This was not Stephens' own sentiment, but rather his statement of the extremist position.

<sup>90</sup> See letter of H. V. Johnson to George A. Half, et al., November 16, 1860, printed in unidentified newspaper clipping, Johnson MSS. The same sentiments were expressed by Douglas repeatedly, the most widely publicized example being his speech at Norfolk, Virginia, August 25, 1860.

<sup>91</sup>Letter of Benjamin Perry to the Charleston, South Carolina, Courier, August 20, 1860 as printed in Kibler, Perry, 326.

<sup>92</sup> Alexander H. Stephens to Linton Stephens, October 15, 1860, Stephens Convent MSS.

give the tone of these excerpts: "In the contingency of the election of a President on the platform of Mr. Seward's Rochester speech, let the Union be dissolved. Let the 'great, but not the greatest of evils' come. For as did the great and good Calhoun, from whom is drawn that expression of value, I love and venerate the Union of these States—but I love liberty and Mississippi more."

Contrary estimates of disunionist sentiment in the South were expressed by various observers. A Florida planter wrote to Douglas with reassurances: "I really have no serious fears for the Union: the masses are more honest and patriotic than the politicians and they will whenever dangers threaten, come to the rescue and save the government." An Arkansas editor echoed these sentiments in his newspaper columns. "The honest masses—the people of this section of the State, cannot & will not allow disunionism," the Arkansan asserted. "The fires of the democracy burn brightly on every hill—top and in every

<sup>93</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, July 27, 1860. Speech of Davis which is quoted is listed as being one he gave at Jackson, Mississippi, July 6, 1860. How far matters had gone since the conventions becomes obvious when this speech of Davis' is compared to one he made in the Senate, May 17, 1860 in which he said: "I have great confidence in the strength of the Union. Every now and then I hear that it is about to tumble to pieces, that somebody is going to introduce a new plank into the platform, and if he does, the Union must tumble down; . . but then. . . . I come to the conclusion that the Union is strong and safe-strong in its power, as well as in the affections of the people." In Dunbar Rowland, Jefferson Davis. Constitutionalist. His Letters. Papers and Speeches, IV (Jackson, Miss., 1923), 337-338.

<sup>94</sup> Thomas Hayes to Douglas, July 20, 1860, Douglas MSS.

valley in Western Arkansas."95

A different view was given in many other sources however. A Texan, writing to a member of the Breckenridge family who was a Constitutional-Unionist, told him: "The Breckenridge men in this and the other Southern States, are generally <u>disunion-ists</u>, and are advocating the claim of Hon. J. C. Breckenridge to the Presidency for the sometimes secret, sometimes avowed purpose of dividing the Democratic vote between him and Hon.

S. A. Douglas, thereby favoring the election of Mr. A. Lincoln, the bare fact of whose election, they say, is just and sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Federal bonds of our great and much belowed country."

A Mississippi diarist made an entry concerning a friend who had elected to support Breckenridge: "Mr. Ventriss is for breaking up the Union & seems rather to desire the election of Lincoln to bring about that result." The diarist added that he feared that this was "the temper and feeling of a great many of our citizens who [were] formerly staunch supporters of the Union."97

Part of the reason for a speaking tour of Johnson through the North in the fall was to alert the voters there to the widespread Southern sentiment for secession solely on the

<sup>95</sup>Van Buren, Arkansas, <u>Press</u> as quoted in the Fayetteville, Arkansas, <u>The Arkansian</u>, <u>September 7</u>, 1860.

<sup>96</sup>George Red to Robert Breckenridge, October 3, 1860, Breckenridge Family Papers, Library of Congress, Vol. 211.

<sup>97</sup>Benjamin C. Wailes Diary, Vol. 31, July 27, 1860, Duke University Special Collection.

grounds of Lincoln's election. In a speech at Cooper Institute in New York Johnson told the crowd that he personally did not consider the election of a Republican cause for secession, but he continued: "I do not say that none of the Southern States will regard the election of the Republican candidate as a sufficient cause of secession. I cannot say so with assurance."

An important but not atypical example of the failure of Northerners to realize the seriousness of Southern secession threats can be found in a letter written by Lincoln in August. Commenting on a letter which he had received from a Virginian, Lincoln stated: "It contains one of the many assurances I received from the South that in no probable event will there be any very formidable effort to break up the Union. The people of the South have too much of good sense, and good temper, to attempt the ruin of the government, rather than see it administered as it was administered by the men who made it."99

The Charleston Mercury, on the other hand, was much more direct in its statement of the issue before the voters.

One of its editorials declared: "The Presidential election turns upon a single fact. If the Northern people, believe that the Southern people will dissolve their connection with them, should the Black Republican party succeed in electing Lincoln

<sup>98</sup> Speech of Johnson, as quoted in Atlanta, Georgia, Southern Confederacy, October 24, 1860.

<sup>99</sup>Lincoln to John B. Fry, August 15, 1860, in Collected Works, IV, 95.

to the Presidency--Lincoln will be defeated. Should they, on the contrary, believe, that the Southern people will submit to Black Republican domination by the election of Lincoln to the Presidency--Lincoln will be elected.\*100

The presence of these major issues—slavery in the territories and the right of secession—caused this 1860 presidential election to be one of the most crucial in the history of the United States. As Avery Craven, a major revisionist historian of the period, has written:

Political campaigns in the United States incline to exaggeration and distortion. Opponents are vilified and the impression given that the destiny of national ideals and human progress is at stake. Passions are aroused, and only the fact that the people have come to understand that they are being lied to prevents dangerous reaction. . . . Now and then, however in American history, the campaign issues themselves have been vital ones. Fundamental differences of opinion and interest have stirred emotions. . . . Then resort to the usual political clap-trap has brought genuine peril and critical national situations have resulted. That happened in 1860.101

examined, and next the "clap-trap" which stimulated the day-to-day excitement of the campaign will be studied. In combination, they will show just how the people of the United States arrived at the point where the differences had to be settled once and for all, where compromise was no longer an acceptable solution to a sufficient number on either side. In 1860 the questions to which politicians; editors, and the common people addressed

<sup>100</sup> August 4, 1860.

<sup>101</sup> Craven, The Coming of the Civil War, 412.

An examination of the progress of the campaign shows the dramatic widening of sectional interests and the intensity of the emotionalism which gripped the country by election day.

#### CHAPTER VII

# TWO PRONGED DOUGLAS-JOHNSON CAMPAIGN TO WIN THE PRESIDENCY-TO SAVE THE UNION

Examples of the "clap trap" which Professor Avery Craven says characterizes elections in the United States are not hard to find in the speeches, newspapers, and letters of the 1860 campaign. Emotionalism and misrepresentation were the rule rather than the exception in much that was said and done between the nominations in the spring and the election in the fall. An example of this kind of campaign trash can be seen in the following quotations from partisan newspapers:

S.A.D. the initials of Stephen A. Douglas are also the initials of his party, Sauce Apeish Demagogues.

Olney Times

#### And the response:

Altogether a mistake. You have been looking at those letters through the foggy glass of Republicanism. The initial letters of the Little Giant's name S.A.D. means, 'Slay All Disunionists,' Irrepressible Conflict--John Brown--Republicans included.

Throughout the campaign name-calling, personal insult, and the impugning of the opponents motives were commonplace.

Unidentified newspaper clipping in John A. Logan Papers, Library of Congress.

The Charleston Mercury quoted an Alabamian as labeling the Douglasites "Mulatto Republicans." A letter to the editor of a North Carolina paper accused the Breckenridge supporters of "indulging in the most scurrillous [sic] abuse and wanton misrepresentations of the motives of Judge Douglas and his friends."

John Cobb described one such incident to his father.

"About 12 o'clock last night [Johnson] was hung & and then burnt in effigy, a paper was pined [sic] on his breast with, 'Gov.

Johnson,' on it & on his back was 'The Arnold of Georgia.'"

Johnson recorded in his autobiography that he believed that:

"This act of vandalism made me friends and votes. The community was indignant. They felt that I was a Georgian . . . that my character was above reproach."

In a letter to Alexander H.

Stephens, however, Johnson revealed a more sensitive reaction to the cold treatment he received in his native state after accepting a place on the Democratic ticket with Douglas. "I am but a frail man. I have my weaknesses—palpable and patent—and one is to be too keenly sensitive to the disapprobation of friends."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>August 4, 1860.

Raleigh, North Carolina, <u>Weekly Standard</u>, August 1, 1860.

John Cobb to Howell Cobb, June 30, 1860, Cobb MSS; Johnson Autobiography, 143. Another account of hanging in effigy of both Douglas and Johnson was recorded by the Charleston Mercury, August 13, 1860 as occurring in Ocala, Florida.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>July 9, 1860.

Montgomery, Alabama, three rotten eggs were thrown at him. The first two struck others in the Douglas party, but the third hit Douglas' hat and splashed into his wife's face. In this instance, as in others throughout the campaign, there was no report of Douglas allowing himself to lose his temper or to indulge in self pity.

After the excitement and divisions which characterized both the Democratic and Republican conventions, it was not surprising that the campaign was one in which each party would "give no quarter" to the other. Only the Constitutionalists made attempts to soothe the troubled political waters, but even some of the men and newspapers which supported Bell indulged in hard fighting at times. The appeal of both Lincoln and Breckenridge was largely sectional, and each party regarded the other as extremist and dangerous. Douglas, occupying a position which was national, attempted to find a middle ground satisfactory to both extremes. The popular sovereignty which he advanced as a solution to the slavery question may have been less than ideal, but it may also have been effective in preventing Civil War if it had been acceptable to a sufficient number of Americans, North and South. Douglas' realization of the seriousness of the dilemma which faced the country caused him to campaign more openly and vigorously than any

Raleigh, North Carolina, <u>Weekly Standard</u>, November 14, 1860.

Douglas to Charles Lanphier, July 5, 1860, <u>Letters</u>, 498.

previous presidential candidate. He realized that the uniqueness of the situation called for unique methods of campaigning.

At the suggestion of the Democratic national chairman, August Belmont, Douglas broke all campaign tradition by setting out on a speaking tour on his own behalf through New York and New England. The old idea that "the office sought the man and not vice-versa" was a pretense that died hard in the nineteenth century. But a direct confrontation with the voters was hardly contrary to Douglas' nature, and he entered into the tour with vigor. Even before Belmont's suggestion came to Douglas his supporters in the South were already talking of the possibility of his taking the stump. And after Douglas began speaking in New England, invitations from the South multiplied: they came from Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. Douglas! Southern supporters universally expressed the sentiment that if Douglas would come to the South a great reaction would take place among the people, and many votes would be gathered for the Douglas candidacy. 10 The New Orleans Bee testified to the power which such personal appearances might hold when it claimed in an editorial: "Stump oratory is the mightest political weapon that can be wielded."11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Belmont to Douglas, July 28, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, July 9, 1860, Johnson MSS; W. K. DeGraffenreid to Douglas, July 16, 1860; James Gardner to Douglas, August 2, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>10</sup>H. B. Tebbetts, August 19, 1860; Joseph Bradley, August 31, 1860; William White, August 17, 1860; A. M. Keiley, August 18, 1860, to Douglas, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>August 25, 1860.

Two reasons were usually advanced for urging Douglas to come South to speak directly to the people. One argument took this form: "You are not understood there [the Southern States]; and I think justice to yourself demands that you go, address the people, and correct the misrepresentations that have been made to them." The second reason may be found in a correspondent's insistence that the South would be "prepared to vote for you if they can be induced to believe that there is a hope of your election and that this impression will be made by your presence I cannot for a moment doubt." 13

Douglas' acceptance of the invitation to take the role of an active campaigner for the presidency probably had a dual motivation. One which may not have been conscious on his part was his natural inclination to enter actively and wholeheartedly into any fray, whether physical or political. Douglas seems never to have been more content than when he was in the midst of political controversy. The second reason which seems to have motivated him was the apparently sincere belief that the people did not realize the seriousness of the political situation of the nation. Douglas thought that if the voters North and South could be brought to realize the grave consequences which might follow the election of Lincoln, they would be more inclined to vote for him and prevent the dissolution of the Union. 14

<sup>12</sup>H. B. Tebbetts to Douglas, August 19, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>13</sup>w. K. DeGraffenreid to Douglas, July 16, 1860, Toid.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Nichols, <u>Disruption of American Democracy</u>, 336.

At first the fact that Douglas would go on a speaking tour on his own behalf was cloaked in terms of a visit to his mother in upstate New York. It was not long, however, before it became obvious both from the circuitous route he took and from the advance notices of the stops he would make, that the trip was primarily political in purpose. On the whole the reaction of the press towards such a precedent-breaking action was negative. One South Carolina journal summed up Southern reaction:

We have fallen on evil times when the high office of President can be sought by arts of electioneering. Alas for our country! Douglas not content with interpolating the most fatal political heresies into our government, trails the imperial purple of the confederacy through the mire of party strife. Shame! Shame!

In the columns of the New York <u>Times</u> an interesting about-face can be traced on the matter of Douglas' campaign. In one editorial only condemnation was apparent: "It is not a seemly or a welcome sight to see any man whom a large portion of his countrymen have thought fit for the Presidency, traversing the county and soliciting his own elevation thereto." Yet, only a week later, the <u>Times</u> seemed to reverse itself and declared: "This is precisely the crisis in which Judge Douglas may render a signal service to the country. . . . He could render them [Southerners] an essential service by disclosing the real character of the issues they are required to meet. If

<sup>15</sup> Spartenburg, South Carolina, <u>Carolina Spartan</u>, September 6, 1860, as quoted in Reynolds, <u>Editors Make War</u>, 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>August 10, 1860.

he should not succeed in changing the popular vote in a single Southern State, he would, at all events, lay the foundation of a powerful Union party, which would serve as a breakwater against any secession movement, by which the peace of the country might be threatened in the event of Lincoln's election."

Breckenridge editors missed no opportunity to find fault with Douglas' speaking tour. One journal claimed that Douglas' speeches made attacks by his opponents unnecessary: "His long search for his mother, though fruitless in one sense, has been productive, at least of the effect of opening the eyes of the people to the real object and designs of this unprincipled schemer. The Telegraph informs us that he is now on his way through New York where we hope he will find frequent opportunities of being betrayed into making speeches. We sincerely wish that he would visit every state in the Union for electioneering purposes as we are convinced that nothing better than such a course can lead to the triumphant election of Breckenridge." 18

The Charleston Mercury admitted that on Douglas' New England tour, "Enthusiastic ovations characterize his receptions; multitudes turn out to meet him." But the article pointed out that these were "localities where Democracy of any stripe amounts to nothing, and where he will have no supporters whatever at the polls." In commenting on the Republican

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, August 16, 1860.

<sup>18</sup>Dallas, Texas, Herald, October 17, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>July 27, 1860.

condemnation of Douglas' speaking tour, the <u>Mercury</u> said: "The press of the country ought to know, by this time, that Mr. Douglas is an exception to all rules." In virtually all of the comments on this breaking of precedent, partisan feelings were obvious.

Alexander H. Stephens, however, gave a confidential assessment to his friend J. Henly Smith. Stephens began with a gloomy summary of the political condition of the country which he predicted was "rushing rapidly to the brink of destruction." "Men have no regard for past principles or professions," Stephens asserted, "Consistency is wholly disregarded. and prejudice rule the hour; reason has lost its sway. truth and right is not sought after. Public virtue is no longer held in its proper estimation, and all our discussions remind me more of the wranglings of the Jacobins in France than anything else. I mean the discussions on the stump and in the newspapers." After this pessimistic evaluation Stephens made one concession: "Mr. Douglas's speeches are an exception. all of them that I have seen he holds a high and statesmanlike position and in them breathes a lofty, national and patriotic tone."21

After campaigning vigorously in New England and New York from mid-July to mid-August, Douglas turned his attention to the border states. He had received urgent appeals that he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>August 5, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>September 15, 1860, <u>Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence</u>, 496.

come to help offset the power of the Breckenridge Democrats who largely controlled the Democratic party's funds and the press in this area and in the deep South. His itinerary for this first foray into the South included stops in Baltimore, in Norfolk, Hampton and Petersburg, Virginia; and in Raleigh, North Carolina. From place to place the speeches Douglas gave reiterated the same principles: non-intervention and the importance of preserving the Union by avoiding the extremism of either Breckenridge or Lincoln.

In the middle of his speech at Norfolk on August 25th, Douglas was handed a slip of paper containing two questions for him from the editor of the Norfolk Argus. The first question asked whether or not, if Lincoln should be elected President, the Southern states would be justified in seceding from the Union. Douglas replied, "To this I answer emphatically, no. The election of a man to the Presidency by the American people, in conformity with the Constitution . . . would not justify any attempt at dissolving this glorious Confederacy." 22

The second question asked: "If [the Southern states] secede from the Union upon the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, before he commits an overt act against their constitutional rights, will you advise or vindicate resistance by force to the decision?" Though the crowd called for a negative answer after the question was read aloud, Douglas courageously replied: "I answer emphatically that it is the duty of the president of the

<sup>22</sup> As quoted in Washington, D.C., <u>Daily National</u> <u>Intelligencer</u>, August 31, 1860.

United States, and all others in authority under him, to enforce the laws of the United States, passed by Congress, and as the courts expound them." Douglas explicitly stated that he would abide by his constitutional duty no matter who the president was, and that he thought the president should treat every attempt at secession "as Old Hickory treated the nullifiers in 1832."

A section of the speech which should have pleased the Southerners, but which seems rather to have escaped them, contained a threat not to the South, but to Lincoln. "I, for one, will sustain with all my energy the President whomever he may be in the exercise of all the powers conferred upon him by the Constitution," Douglas declared, "but I would take just as much pleasure in hanging him if he transcended those powers as I feel pleasure in knowing that you hanged John Brown when he was guilty of murder and treason against the State of Virginia."

Douglas was a master of political sparring and did not fail to use this opportunity to put his opponent, Breckenridge, in the position of defendant. After explaining his answers, Douglas asked that since the question had "emanated from the friends of the secessionist candidate, I ask that like questions may be also put to those candidates, and that you insist upon such frank and unequivocal answers as I have given." Such

<sup>23&</sup>lt;sub>Ib1d</sub>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>**Ibid**.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>**Ibid**.

challenges were, however, to no avail since, with the exception of one speech at Lexington, Kentucky, Breckenridge did not appear on the hustings during the campaign. A Douglas newspaper conjectured that since Breckenridge "refuses to answer the Norfolk questions at all, we may fairly conclude that he thinks the same way with Douglas." Lincoln and Bell were also silent on these questions. Neither made public statements during the campaign.

Some of Douglas' friends declared that his forthright answers won him many friends. Such an impression might have been gathered from certain newspaper accounts of the meeting, for the Norfolk Herald reported that the speech was "pronounced by all who heard it to have been 'a masterly and powerful argument,' and that Mr. Douglas produced a decidedly favorable impression upon that community." Such estimates of the effect of Douglas' declaration in favor of coercion should the South attempt to secede were few and far between in the deep South. Rather, the speech was generally condemned in the Southern press, and used as further ammunition against Douglas there.

In reporting the incident the Natchez <u>Free Trader</u> warned:

"Let the desperate adventurer and traitor Douglas declare what
he pleases about coercion, the chivalric South will bristle

Augusta, Georgia, <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u>, October 31, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup>As quoted in Washington <u>Daily National Intelligencer</u>, August 31, 1860.

with armed men to repel such aggressions."<sup>28</sup> The Richmond Enquirer, which supported Breckenridge throughout the campaign, responded to Douglas' utterances at Norfolk with cutting invective: "Mr. Douglas appears before the people of Virginia in a new role—that of Lincoln's whipper—in. . . . We have only to say to Mr. Douglas that when he undertakes to coerce, as Lincoln's lieutenant, the sovereign States of the South, the gallows of John Brown will be re-erected, and he may find himself pendant therefrom."<sup>29</sup>

After Douglas' Norfolk speech was praised in a New York
paper which conjectured that he would not be afraid to repeat
it in South Carolina, or Alabama, the Charleston Mercury
responded with its usual denunciation:

Mr. Douglas will take very good care that 'occasion' shall NOT 'offer to say it in South Carolina.'...
Mr. Douglas, upon the back of this insolent assertion of his, cannot possibly make a speech in South Carolina. His voice will not be tolerated in this State--even though it be 'a free country.' It is more than the wholesome condition of his skin is worth. He would be kicked from any stump in the state. 30

Two months after the speech it was still referred to in Southern newspapers. Just before Douglas' visit to Alabama in late October, a Breckenridge journal reported: "Somebody is curious to know why Douglas is coming to speak at this place . . . . Well, that's easily answered. He is coming to tell our

<sup>28</sup> October 3, 1860, as quoted in Crenshaw, Slave States, 79. See this source for other evidence of this kind of reaction, 77-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>August 31, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>September 5, 1860. The New York paper was the Commercial Advertiser.

people what he said at Norfolk, about aiding Lincoln to whip out the South."31

The few words of praise of Douglas' unionism in the South came from the journals which supported him and from a few of the Bell papers. One of the latter praised Douglas' courage: "The man who faced abolition mobs in Chicago [1857] was not afraid to say what he thinks in Georgia." The Daily Constitutionalist praised Douglas because he talked to the South "in the same honest way that he has talked to the people of this whole nation." But such words of praise were few and far between.

Linton Stephens wrote to his brother, Alexander: "My judgement is that Douglas made a great point in answering those questions [at Norfolk] I think his answers were right, wise, discreet, and shrewd."<sup>34</sup> Other politicians, however, would not agree with this judgment. Senator Thomas Clingman of North Carolina recounts in his memoirs that he could not believe Douglas' remarks at Norfolk as reported in the press, and that when Douglas came to Raleigh a few days later to address the state Democratic meeting, he [Clingman] tried to get Douglas to "explain away the objectionable statement." Douglas promised to think about Clingman's objections, but the next day in his

Montgomery, Alabama, Weekly Mail, October 26, 1860.

<sup>32</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, November 1, 1860.

<sup>33&</sup>lt;sub>October 31, 1860.</sub>

<sup>34</sup> September 5, 1860, Stephens Convent MSS.

"I would hang every man higher than Haman who would attempt by force to resist the execution of any provision of the Constitution which our fathers made and bequeathed to us." After this Clingman switched his allegiance from Douglas to Breckenridge and, in his "speeches took ground for resistance to Lincoln." Another senator, David Yulee of Florida, had supported Douglas until the Norfolk speech, but thereafter repudiated him and supported Breckenridge. 37

Howell Cobb, long an opponent of Douglas, commented in a letter to a fellow-Georgian: "In all the southern states things look much better--The threat of Douglas to coerce the South into subjection to Lincoln and abolitionists has aroused a spirit which will sweep Douglasism from every southern state." 38

For the next six weeks Douglas again campaigned in the Northwest and in the East. After the Norfolk speech a distinct change in the emphasis in his speeches can be noted. At the beginning of the campaign it seemed that Douglas was seriously seeking votes which would elect him to the presidency. He spent most of his time expounding his doctrine of popular sovereignty

<sup>35</sup>Clingman, Speeches and Writings, 512-513; Douglas' speech at Raleigh, August 30, 1860 reprinted in Emerson Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860 (New York, 1911), 282.

<sup>36</sup> Clingman, Speeches and Writings, 513.

<sup>37</sup>Wickliffe Yulee, "Senator Yulee," Florida Historical Quarterly, II (April, 1909), 38.

<sup>38</sup> Cobb to James M. Spurlock, September 25, 1860, Spurlock MSS.

as the solution to the nation's sectional problems. The editor of the New York <u>Times</u> complained that Douglas "has staked so much on the Squatter Sovereignty doctrine, that he seems to be falling into a monomania about it, and drags it about the country with him with as much assiduity as if it were a change of linens, or a toothorush." 39

After the Norfolk speech, however, the theme of the preservation of the Union took first place in Douglas' rhetoric. At a speech given in New York City on September 12th, Douglas warned his audience: "You cannot fail to perceive that this Union is in danger. . . . They [Southern fire-eaters] have resolved that whenever they obtain a plausible pretext [they will] precipitate this country into a revolution: they have resolved to make the election of a Black Republican President that pretext, and hence they really desire the election of Lincoln, thinking they can accomplish their object of disunion."

After the state elections in early October convinced Douglas that Lincoln would be elected, the Little Giant decided to take his campaign for the Union to the deep South. In a gargantuan effort, since he was already exhausted from the rigors of campaigning and in failing health, Douglas spoke at every major city in Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia. A Douglas paper declared that this Southern tour was "one protracted ovation. At every ferry on the river and station on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup>July 24, 1860.

<sup>40</sup> Speech of Douglas reprinted in Washington Daily National Intelligencer, September 15, 1860.

railroad track, he has been met by the most enthusiastic and immense assemblages of the people." According to the same account those who were "preparing tar and feathers and the appliances of ruffianism for him, have slunk back abashed before the moral courage of the Senator and the indignant protest of honest citizens."

In a speech typical of those on this second Southern tour and delivered in Montgomery, Alabama, on the eve of the election, Douglas again pleaded for the continuance of the Union. He repeated his reasons for resisting the dissolution of the Union upon the mere election of Lincoln. He pointed out that since the Republicans would not have control of Congress that there was little Lincoln could do to infringe on the rights of any state or group. He reiterated what he had said at Norfolk, that should Lincoln commit some overt act against the South, and clearly unconstitutional, he would favor punishment regardless of high office.

Toward the end of this speech, Douglas told his hearers that he believed there was "a conspiracy on foot to break up this Union." He issued a plea for the preservation of the Union: "Let the Union men of this country rally, let all the friends of Constitutional principles, of Constitutional government, all the enemies of sectional strife and agitation, rally around the principle of non-intervention, and we will crush out

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup>Richmond, Virginia, <u>Index</u>, November 6, 1860, clipping in Johnson MSS.

Northern abolitionism and Southern disunionism. "42

While Douglas campaigned North and South, his running-mate Johnson did the same. In the first month of the campaign Johnson's efforts were mainly limited to speaking engagements in Georgia and Alabama. Late in the summer, however, at the urging of August Belmont, Johnson took the stump in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. Though from the beginning, Johnson was less optimistic about the outcome of the election than Douglas was, he, nevertheless, did yeoman's service in the cause he had pledged to support.

Before Johnson's return to Georgia after he had accepted the vice-presidential nomination, the Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel had lamented the fact that the National Democrats would lose Johnson's considerable talents for stump speaking, it "not being considered decent or respectable for candidates to mount the hustings, Mr. Breckenridge being, we believe, the first and only candidate for the Vice-presidency who ever condescended to such mode of electioneering." In making such a statement, however, the editor failed to realize that Douglas and Johnson would not honor that tradition. As a matter of fact, as soon as Johnson returned from Washington he spoke at Atlanta one evening and at Macon the next.

<sup>42</sup> Speech reprinted in "The Montgomery Address of Stephen A. Douglas," edited by David Barbee and Milledge Bonham, Jr., in <u>Journal of Southern History</u>, V (November, 1939), 527-552. Quotation is from 551.

<sup>43</sup> Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, June 27, 1860.

"Not a friend greeted me with a smile and those that called on me, called to express their regrets at the fatal step I had taken. . . One friend, and one who was really a supporter of Douglas, called to warn me against speaking. . . . He said he feared if I attempted it, personal violence would be offered me; for he had heard it threatened openly on the street during that day. . . I told him . . . that in defiance of all threats, I would speak." Johnson added, "I spoke for two hours. Not a murmur was heard—not a hiss disturbed the hall."

A different version of Johnson's reception was given by John Cobb to his father. "Gov. Johnson made a speech here last night, he had a good crowd, but most of them were against him, whenever he mentioned Breckenridges name nearly every man in the house would applaud. It made him very mad, he only spoke one hour & a quarter. He went there prepared with extracts & papers to make a long speech. . . . Johnson found out from the reception given to him here that the people are not as much with him as he thought for [sic] & he feels it."45

At other times also during the campaign, Johnson's fellow Georgians reacted negatively to his stump speeches. In August, Dr. Richard Arnold, mayor of Savannah and long-time opponent of Johnson's wrote to a friend: "Johnson's speech here was a dead failure. . . . [He] was hissed once or twice,

<sup>44</sup> Autobiography, 141-142, Johnson MSS.

<sup>45</sup> John Cobb to Howell Cobb, June 30, 1860, Cobb MSS.

and when Breckenridge and Yancey's names were pronounced they were received with shouts of applause."46 In a similar vein, the editor of the Macon, Georgia, Telegraph described Johnson in a letter to another Breckenridge supporter: "Johnson goes about abusing us with the virulence of a hydrophobic dog. He seems to run riot in his deep double dyed concentrated hatred of everything patriotic & Southern. . . . [He] met with a severe rebuke at the Indian Springs the other day where he had less than 20 persons to hear him. It made him so 'mad' that it is said he swore 'that there was only one thing worse than Breckenridge & that was Hell.' A strange wicked & foolish expression, if true, but characteristic of the man."47

Two other estimates of Johnson's efforts show still other sides of the campaign. A Savannah paper which supported Bell reported that: "Johnson has made two speeches, & though coldly, if not discourteously received in both instances, he sowed the seed that are bound to spring up into a harvest after many days. His argument upon the consistency of the Seceders running two Squatter Sovereigns after quitting their party because it advocated Squatter Sovereignty, we hear, is telling with great effect." The closing sentence of the letter touched on a trait of Johnson's which was a potential liability in the campaign. "Governor Johnson has only to learn to keep his

<sup>46</sup>Richard Arnold to Col. J. D. Hoover, August 13, 1860, in Richard Shryock, ed., Letters of Richard Arnold in Papers of the Trinity College Historical Society, XVIII-XIX (Durham, N. C., 1929), 97.

<sup>47</sup> James M. Green to John B. Lamar, September 3, 1860, Cobb MSS.

temper, to make sad havoc in the camp of the enemy. "48

Linton Stephens, after hearing Johnson's Macon address, complained to his brother: "[Johnson] does not appreciate the point of greatest strength in his position, and that is the danger of rendering slavery odious to our allies and to the world by making it aggressive—by forcing it upon an unwilling people. . . . The ark of its safety and progress, is the doctrine of perfect and unmitigated non-intervention."

weeks, Johnson left Georgia late in the summer and began a speaking tour of the Northern states in response to an invitation from August Belmont. One reason for this strategy was that some of the Northern states held state elections early in the fall and it was thought that if all efforts were concentrated there, and the results were favorable, this would affect the Southern vote more than further speechmaking in the South. Therefore, Johnson left the campaigning in Georgia to Alexander H. Stephens and others in the state who supported the Douglas ticket. 50

Johnson's Northern tour began in New York City where he spoke along with Douglas at an outdoor rally. This appears to

<sup>48</sup> Savannah Republican as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, July 7, 1860.

<sup>49</sup>Linton Stephens to Alexander H. Stephens, June 29, 1860, Stephens Convent MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup>Letter of Belmont to Johnson, undated, Johnson MSS. At the outset of the campaign Stephens had declared that he would not take an active part, but during the last two months he gave many speeches favoring Douglas in Georgia.

have been the first time Douglas and Johnson had met since the beginning of the campaign. Since there are no known extant letters between the two, Johnson's autobiographical account of this occasion is the only record of his impressions of Douglas during the campaign. Johnson expressed surprise at Douglas' optimism, and though he did not share this view of the outcome of the election, at least he was somewhat encouraged by Douglas' high hopes.

Johnson conveyed to Douglas the hopelessness which he felt as to their cause in the South. Of Douglas' reaction to this, Johnson recalled: "I shall never forget the expression of deep sadness at this announcement. He was silent and thoughtful for a moment, but rallying, said, 'If you be correct in your views, then God help our poor country. " Douglas then expressed to Johnson his surprise at the fact that the South was so hostile to him after it had supported him so strongly four years before for the nomination, and since he had not changed his views on non-intervention in that time. Johnson hazarded the guess that it was the extremists of the South and the hostility of the Buchanan administration which had caused the change in attitude, and Douglas seemed to share these views. However, considering the many events with dire political consequences which had occurred between 1856 and 1860, such as the Lecompton constitution and Douglas! Freeport doctrine it is questionable how many Southerners would have agreed with this limited explanation which Johnson offered. 51

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup>Autobiography, 145.

From New York, Johnson traveled through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana and back to New York. Everywhere he spoke at National Democratic rallies. He was impressed with the enthusiasm he saw in Douglas' favor, but he did not hesitates to warn his listeners that, as a Southerner, he feared for the unity of the country. On one such occasion he summed up his warning in these words: "You do not appreciate [the danger to the Union] as I do. I am among the people there. I assure you, my friends, that I intend only to appeal to your patriotism and not to your fears; but I tell you . . . that I do believe there is danger." 52

Johnson expressed the opinion that his Northern tour had helped Douglas' cause there. "I think my trip North has been of service to our cause," he wrote to Stephens. "I have never seen such enthusiasm. No living man has so deep a place in the hearts of the N[orth] W[est] Dem[ocracy] as Douglas."53 Later Johnson recalled his impression of the crowds of Northerners he had addressed: "Their devotion to the Union was almost idolatry and I came to the conclusion that peaceable secession was out of the question and that war with such a people should be avoided as long as possible."

<sup>52</sup>Unidentified newspaper clipping reporting Johnson's speech at Cooper Institute, New York, October 24, 1860, Johnson MSS.

<sup>53</sup> Johnson to Alexander H. Stephens, October 1, 1860, Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Autobiography, 149.

A strong impression one gathers from Johnson's letters, speeches, and autobiography is that of the radical nature of the divisions which infected political opinions and loyalties during the campaign. This same impression is obtained by reading the letters of politicians and of common people and by examining the newspapers of the South which were the common man's political handbooks. Throughout the campaign letter writers and editors reacted to the speeches of both Douglas and Johnson.

One of the characteristics of Douglas support both in newspapers and letters from the South was the intensity with which it was expressed. Since Douglas' cause was that of the underdog from the beginning of the campaign, there were few, if any, crowd followers. To favor openly the Douglas-Johnson candidacy anywhere in the South was to invite insult and rejection by many fellow members of the Democratic party. Bell supporters were usually kinder to Douglas' followers than were Breckenridge Democrats. Those who did support Douglas, therefore, often had a dyed-in-the-wool kind of loyalty which found expression in rhetorical editorials and letters to Douglas professing devotion to the cause.

The majority of Southern newspapers supported Breckenridge; the next greatest number supported Bell; the Douglas
cause ran a poor third and even some of these papers, for
example the Raleigh Weekly Standard, deserted the Douglas cause
in the midst of the campaign. Other Douglas papers were forced
out of business because of the large number of cancellations

of subscriptions.55

A few examples of the expressions of unswerving loyalty to Douglas found in Southern newspapers will suffice to show the tone which was present in most of them. Probably the most influential Southern newspaper which supported Douglas was the Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist. Throughout the campaign this paper urged the election of Douglas as the best Northern friend the South had, as the legitimate nominee of the Democratic party, and as the only means of avoiding a dissolution of the Union. In the last weekly edition before the election the editors summarized the reasons for voting for Douglas which they had been giving throughout the campaign:

If you love a Democrat of the Jackson school, vote for Douglas

If you don't think a man false to the South who tells treason what Jackson told it, vote for Douglas

If you like a man who hates Abolitionism, and can make the same speeches North and South, vote for Douglas

If you like a man who is not a dumb candidate, but can answer plainly any question of national politics, vote for Douglas.56

Two studies of newspapers in this campaign exist. The most complete is the one found in the relevant chapters of Reynolds' excellent study, Editors Make War. A shorter study more focused on the number of papers supporting each candidate and the probable influence of these papers on the outcome of the election is David Porter, "The Southern Press and the Presidential Election of 1860," West Virginia History, XXXIII (October, 1971), 1-13.

<sup>56</sup> October 31, 1860; a similar list appeared in the Richmond Index, November 6, 1860, only this one contained a slap at Breckenridge also: "If you desire to reward ingratitude, inconsistency and base treachers, VOTE FOR BRECKENRIDGE." Clipping in Johnson MSS.

The only South Carolina paper which supported Douglas, the Edgefield Advertiser, was frequently required to defend itself against charges of treason to the South. In one issue the editor declared: "We have maintained that the question involved in this discussion is an abstraction; that Senator Douglas should not be politically beheaded by his party on account of an abstract opinion which he declaredly holds in subjection to what has been or will be the decision of the Supreme Court; and that the present importance of this issue was not sufficient to justify a disruption of the National Democratic Party on the eve of its last great conflict with Black Republicanism."

The Bell papers frequently expressed a preference for Douglas over Breckenridge. The Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel declared shortly after the nominations: "As regards Mr. Breckenridge and Judge Douglas, we suppose no one doubts that the latter is immensely superior in popularity, ability, and experience, and as to the position, sentiments, and feelings of the two in relation to African slavery, we must confess that Breckenridge is, if possible, worse than Douglas."58

The Breckenridge press, however indulged in tirades against Douglas and his supporters, spread rumors damaging to his cause, and took advantage of every opportunity to put Douglas in a bad light. The Charleston Mercury asserted toward

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup>Edgefield, South Carolina, <u>Advertiser</u>, August 8, 1860.
<sup>58</sup>July 7, 1860.

the end of the campaign, in a wild flurry of metaphors: "Mr. Breckenridge is gaining votes daily, and Douglas men, finding their chances growing thinner every day, are coming over to the safe side of the house. Mr. Douglas' speeches East, villifying the South, . . . are helping him up the Salt river against his Squatter Sovereignty tide, even, faster than he has any idea of. He may imagine that he is floating down stream Northeast; but if he will just throw his log overboard Southwest, he will find he is making ten knots, at least upstream." 59

The Breckenridge press was also quick to point out every person who endorsed Douglas' candidacy and who could be tainted with Republicanism or connected with some scandal.

Rumors of Douglas making deals with Horace Greeley were frequent. 60 The support of Cornelius Wendell, government printer recently exposed for corruption by a congressional committee, was denounced. John Forney, former Clerk of the House, who had deserted Buchanan and made war upon the Administration, was another whose support of Douglas was not considered honorable by the Administration papers. An article listing several such Douglas supporters concluded: "The same character of men all over the country are interested in the election of Douglas. As it is a world-wide maxim that a man must be judged by the company he keeps, let honest men beware of such associations." 61

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup>September 25, 1860. The Salt River is a mythological river up which defeated politicians were said to have gone to oblivion.

<sup>60</sup> Des Arc, Arkansas, <u>Citizen</u>, August 15, 1860; Montgomery, Alabama, <u>Weekly Mail</u>, October 26, 1860.

<sup>61</sup>Des Arc, Arkansas, <u>Citizen</u>, August 15, 1860.

Though denouncing Douglasites as dishonest, the Breckenridge press was not above spreading lies. One article claimed
that "every . . . Democratic member of either House of Congress
from a slave holding State, save two from Missouri, is known to
have hastened to define his position orally or in writing
against Douglas--every one."

This was not true, as was
certainly known by the author of this editorial. Congressman
Miles Taylor of Louisiana was chairman of the Democratic executive committee which supported Douglas; several other congressmen, Albert Rust of Arkansas, Andrew Hamilton of Texas, John
Young Brown of Kentucky and George Houston of Alabama endorsed
the Douglas-Johnson ticket.

63

Another example of falsehood passed on in the press was an item in the Mercury which reported that Congressman Thomas G. Davidson of Louisiana had been campaigning vigorously against Douglas. The report stated that: "After searching the political record thoroughly, he could find no single act of Mr. Douglas' which was friendly to the South."

Private letters too condemned Douglas in unmitigated terms. A federal office holder in Missouri who owed his position to Buchanan wrote to the President in September: "I think we are not far from the end of Douglasism when we do get to the

<sup>62</sup> Washington Evening Star, July 3, 1860.

<sup>63</sup> Crenshaw, Slave States, 268, 281; New York Times, August 11, 1860; Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, August 8, 1860; Charlotte, North Carolina, Whig, October 23, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup>July 27, 1860.

end we shall have killed one of the most corrupt politicians (not statesmen) that our country has ever known."65

But in spite of denunciations of the Little Giant from those Democrats who refused his leadership, his cause grew steadily during the months of the campaign. This fact was attested to, not only in letters to Douglas and in the columns of the newspapers which supported him, but even in the letters and newspapers of his opponents, and in those of the Union party.

Many of the letters sent to Douglas himself were full of encouragement, especially during the summer months. Pierre Soule of Louisiana with whom Douglas had served in the Senate informed him: "In this region, we are gaining every day, [converts] from the ranks of the enemy, and the prospect is fair of our carrying Louisiana by handsome majorities, and perhaps even Alabama, though by smaller numbers." A letter from North Carolina warned Douglas not to be misled by the press. "You may suppose from what once was the Democratic press in N.C. that you had few friends in N.C. but this is not the case, our papers do not represent the People. They are one way and the people another and the 7th Nov. will show it." From Virginia, a supporter who told Douglas he had "spoken my throat sore, in your behalf," assured him, "A tremendous reaction is

<sup>65</sup> Issac Sturgeon to Buchanan, September 6, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>66</sup> Soule to Douglas, July 27, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>67</sup>William White to Douglas, August 17, 1860, Ibid.

going on in this State. I do not even <u>despair</u>, of final and complete success in November next." And from Tennessee came a somewhat veiled assurance of the strength of the Douglas candidacy: "The Bolters are beginning to carry pretty long faces." 69

Douglas supporters exchanged letters that indicated hope in the ultimate success of their cause. Belmont wrote to Johnson late in the summer: "Our prospects are brightening every day all over the country & the reaction in favor of you & Douglas spreads with giant steps. "70 In his less than optimistic manner Alexander H. Stephens told his journalist friend about a Douglas meeting attended by about two thousand persons and commented: "Where four weeks ago there were not ten Douglas men to be found, our friends assure me that Douglas and Johnson will get 3,500 votes in the 5th district. I can hardly think it is so, but such is their belief. The changes are daily and numerous."71 James Gardner received a letter from Savannah which asserted: "We are gaining ground here every day politically. . . . Old Chatham [the county in which Savannah is located] will surprise the opposition in November. " The writer's sincerity is indicated by a postscript in which he told of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup>H. L. Hopkins to Douglas, August 11, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

<sup>69</sup>H. M. Matterston (?) to Douglas, August 4, 1860, Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup>Undated, Johnson MSS.

<sup>71</sup>Stephens to J. Henly Smith, September 30, 1860, in Toombs. Stephens. Cobb Correspondence, 500.

bets he had made on Douglas' majorities in Georgia. 72

Douglas newspapers too spoke in encouraging terms of the increasing popularity of the Douglas-Johnson ticket. One North Carolina newspaper took down the Breckenridge and Lane names from its masthead in early September and in explanation of this action declared: "That Mr. Douglas is a safe statesman, no man with his senses can deny, and his claims and those of his supporters as Democrats are entitled to weighty consideration." The New York Herald, in reporting on the Douglas-Johnson cause in Georgia, commented that while a few weeks before their "followers could scarcely be numbered by tens, now they can be counted by hundreds and thousands." 74

Even from Arkansas and Mississippi where the Douglas cause was very weak, came claims of his increasing popularity. From the former came the assertion that, "There is a mighty uprising of the people—of the masses—in favor of our national nominees, Douglas and Johnson, & they will undoubtedly receive heavy majorities in northwestern Arkansas. . . . The honest masses . . . will not allow disunionism. The fires of the democracy burn brightly . . . and on every unfurled banner may be seen inscribed 'Douglas and Johnson.' "75 An account of

<sup>72</sup>R. Fleming to James Gardner, July 23, 1860, James Gardner Papers, Georgia State Archives, Atlanta, Ga.

<sup>73</sup>Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, September 12, 1860.

<sup>74</sup>Unidentified newspaper clipping quoting New York Herald, September 18, 1860, Johnson MSS.

<sup>75</sup> VanBuren, Arkansas, <u>Press</u> as quoted in Fayetteville, Arkansas, <u>The Arkansian</u>, September 7, 1860.

Douglas sentiment in Mississippi was contained in the Memphis Appeal. After admitting that Douglas support had first been confined to the northern counties, the Appeal continued: "But it is now evident that before November rolls around, the whole State, North, South, East and West, will be in a blaze. The people—the honest masses who have more at stake than all the politicians and office—holders in Christendom put together—are not prepared to break into pieces the only political organization which in its original strength, has the power to protect and perpetuate their liberties."

An Athens, Georgia paper attempted to counter the claim that there were no Douglas men in the 6th district. "What a prodigious mistake! They are 'common as pig tracks' even here in Athens, & if the rumors which have reached us concerning the attitude of many of the leaders in the counties about this point can be relied on, some of them will indubitably go for Douglas!" A traveling correspondent for a Bell paper in Alabama wrote from Columbus, Mississippi: "I have yet to find the first place where either of the candidates are entirely without friends. They all have some, and the Democracy is much more liberally divided with Mr. Douglas than the friends of his opposition are willing to admit." 78

<sup>76</sup> Memphis, Tennessee, Appeal, August 5, 1860, as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Daily Constitutionalist, August 9, 1860.

<sup>77</sup> Athens, Georgia, <u>Watchman</u>, as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, <u>Chronicle and Sentinel</u>, July 6, 1860.

<sup>78</sup> Mobile, Alabama, <u>Daily Advertiser</u>, as quoted in Washington <u>National Intelligencer</u>, August 25, 1860.

Even the newspapers supporting the Breckenridge ticket were forced, at times, to admit to the growing strength of Douglas' candidacy. One Virginia paper which had the Breckenridge and Lane ticket at its masthead expressed the opinion in mid-July that, "At the lowest calculation, & under the most unfavorable circumstances, Judge Douglas will get 20,000 votes in Virginia." The Charleston Mercury backhandedly admitted that Douglas had a good number of followers in the South when one of its news items declared: "The only surprise is that there are Southern men who are dupes of [Douglas] unprincipled scheming, who will second his dark plots, and help to dethrone the Constitution."

An administration appointee wrote to the President:

"We are working with all our energy but I must confess there is great danger of Missouri voting for Douglas."

And in several letters in the Cobb collection admission of Douglas' strength is found. One postscript contained the terse estimate: "Douglas and Johnson stock rising—and Breckenridge and Lane (or disunion) stock falling rapidly."

Another quoted Slidell as saying:

"They [the Douglas men] are giving us a sharper fight in Louisiana than I expected."

83

<sup>79</sup> Lynchburg Republican, as quoted in Augusta, Georgia, Chronicle and Sentinel, July 20, 1860.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup>July 27, 1860.

<sup>81</sup> Issac Sturgeon to Buchanan, August 30, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>82</sup> J. M. Bradford to J. B. Lamar, July 23, 1860, Cobb MSS.

 $<sup>^{83}</sup>$ P. Clayton (?) to Howell Cobb, October 6, 1860, <u>Ibid</u>.

In spite of this evidence of optimism, there was also a good deal of more realistic appraisal of Douglas cause and speculation that his chance to win the electoral votes of the South was not very great. Throughout the campaign all sides admisted that one factor in determining Douglas strength would be the results of the fall elections in the North. Should these result in large Democratic victories that fact would encourage Southerners to vote for Douglas. Should the Northern elections, however, be largely won by Republicans, that would cause Southerners to vote more heavily for the Breckenridge ticket. The reasoning behind this idea was that should Southerners think Douglas had a chance of defeating Lincoln, they would consent to vote for him, but should they see his cause in the North as hopeless, they would cast their votes for Breckenridge and the party which promised more drastic action in the event of Lincoln's election to the Presidency.

One of those least willing to be optimistic about Douglas' cause was Alexander H. Stephens. It seems that Stephens supported Douglas mostly out of his conviction that the Breckenridge party had no legitimacy and tended towards disunionism. In mid-September, Stephens wrote to his friend Smith: "The tendencies are favourable to Douglas-becoming more so daily. If there was any prospect of his election a perfect enthusiasm could be got up for him-much more than for any other candidate. But his chances seem to be a hopeless battle before the people and in the House, and hence the indifference of thousands who would otherwise be active, warm and zealous in

his cause. "84

The claims of the Breckenridge men that Douglas had little strength were probably partly propaganda and partly truth. One stump speaker wrote to Attorney General Jeremiah Black that at a Breckenridge mass meeting he had bid his audience "not to fear giants especially when they are little ones, I begged the giant [Douglas] to remember that Breckenridge was named Jack and Jack had been a giant killer from time immemorial."

A Breckenridge man from Georgia wrote to J. Henly Smith: "There is no kind of doubt about Breckenridge carrying every Southern state—also California and Oregon."

The letter went on to give a possible explanation for the seeming strength of the Douglas ticket. "The opposition papers are flattering and deceiving the Douglas men, in order to encourage them. They are playing the game well."

Just a month before the election, the secretary of the Breckenridge wing of the Democratic party wrote to Buchanan:
". . . from La. Ala. Ga. & Tenn. [sic] the news is much more cheering than ever before in the canvass. The question with the writers seems to be, not whether Breckenridge & Lane will get a majority in those states, but how large the majorities

<sup>84</sup> September 12, 1860, Toombs, Stephens, Cobb Correspondence, 495-496.

<sup>851.</sup> M. Campbell to Jeremiah Black, July \_\_\_, 1860, Black MSS.

<sup>86</sup> John J. Jones to J. Henly Smith, September 10, 1860, J. Henly Smith Manuscripts, Georgia State Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

will be. "87

Howell Cobb in a letter to his wife also predicted Douglas' defeat: "In the political world everything looks well. It is becoming doubtful whether the Douglas men will run an electoral ticket. . . . It makes no difference what they do--as the state [Georgia] will go by a large majority to Breckenridge in any event." Another letter from Georgia claimed: "It is no idle boast but a . . . fact that Cobb County voting 2000 votes does not contain a Douglas man." In proof of his statement the writer claimed that the Bell men who have been "solicitous for Douglas just now, have used all industry and have not been able to scare up one." A letter from Florida claimed: "I have heard of but one Douglas man in my county . . . . Douglas could not, if he had a ticket, get more than 250 or 300 votes in the State."

Breckenridge newspapers also predicted the utter defeat of the Douglas ticket in the South. One item toward the end of the campaign read: "The Douglas men are dropping off by hundreds; Douglas newspapers are coming to Breckenridge; and the whole aspect shows that the small giant is growing

<sup>87</sup> Fred Aiken to Buchanan, October 3, 1860, Buchanan MSS.

<sup>88</sup> August 13, 1860, Cobb MSS.

<sup>89</sup> James Cooper to Howell Cobb, July 31, 1860, Cobb MSS. In the November election Douglas did get 54 votes in this county.

<sup>90</sup> Letter to the editor from Silver Springs, East Florida, in Raleigh, North Carolina, Weekly Standard, October 17, 1860. This prediction was quite accurate. Douglas got only 367 votes in Florida.

beautifully less. "91

From either end of the South came equally dire estimates of Douglas support. The Charleston Mercury pointed out that "Douglas men are so scarce in Arkansas that it is deemed worth while to telegraph to the country the fact that a club of his friends have been formed in one town of the State, and that there is a street in that town spanned by a Douglas flag." From Virginia came word also of the scarcity of Douglas' supporters. "Only in a few scattered localities does the Douglas ticket make any material exhibition of strength. With all the means of authentic information within our reach, and by the most liberal calculation, we find that Mr. Douglas cannot count an average of 50 supporters in each county of the State." 93

In spite of the predictions of the self-appointed pollsters, Douglas continued the campaign until the eve of election day. The last two weeks he spent in the heart of the deep South addressing crowds in every major city and at every whistle stop. He spoke less and less about voting for Stephen Douglas and more and more about the Union. Without regard to exhaustion or the hopelessness of his own candidacy, Douglas stumped the South in an attempt to save the Union from the extremism of the fire-eaters. His efforts proved to be in vain but that does not subtract from the patriotism which inspired

<sup>91</sup> Montgomery, Alabama, Weekly Mail, October 24, 1860.

<sup>92</sup> August 10, 1860.

<sup>93</sup>Richmond Enquirer, August 24, 1860.

them. The results of the election were determined by many complex factors; the men both North and South who shaped those times shared equally in the making of those circumstances which made it no longer possible to preserve the Union "half slave and half free."

## CHAPTER VIII

## AFTERMATH OF THE ELECTION

In spite of the herculean efforts of Douglas in the last weeks of the campaign to save the Union from dissolution, the results of the election on November 6 gave Lincoln a majority of the electoral votes and gave Southern secessionists the excuse they were looking for to dissolve the Union.

Even before election day many observers conceded that Lincoln would win, and in the South there was a growing sentiment for secession from the Union in that case. The balloting merely sealed what had been almost certain for weeks, ever since the split in the Democratic party had been finalized at Baltimore. The choice of those who opposed Douglas at Charleston and Baltimore had been a double one: first, the obvious one of defeating Douglas, but also the implicit and probably unintentional one of dividing the party's strength and concomitantly giving the united Republican party the advantage in the Presidential contest.

Though Lincoln obtained 180 electoral votes, he was, nevertheless, a minority president since this electoral vote represented only 39.91 percent of the popular vote, cast almost

exclusively in northern states. The two advantages which Lincoln enjoyed in the contest were that his strength was concentrated in a certain populous area of the country and that he was the candidate of a united party. None of the other three candidates shared both of these advantages. The disadvantage of Lincoln's strength being so exclusively in the North was that his election hardly presaged peace for a nation already torn by sectional conflicts.

The election results were no more a surprise to Douglas than to other observers of the political scene. As early as his New England tour Douglas had expressed the belief that Lincoln would be elected. And when, on October 8th while on a speaking tour of Iowa, Douglas received word of the Republican victories in Pennsylvania and Indiana, he reportedly said to his secretary: "Mr. Lincoln is the next President. We must try to save the Union. I will go South." And it was in the deep South, in Mobile, Alabama, that Douglas spent election day and heard the confirmation of Lincoln's election. The only record of Douglas' immediate reaction was given in a letter written by his secretary who said: "Douglas returned to his hotel more hopeless than I had ever before seen him."

Unless otherwise stated election statistics throughout this chapter are taken from the <u>Tribune Almanac and Political</u> Register for 1861 (New York, 1861), 39-64.

As quoted in Henry Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America, II (Boston, 1874), 699-700.

<sup>3&</sup>lt;u>Tb1d</u>., 700.

Douglas was not one to give in to his hopelessness for long, however. A few days after the election he set out for New Orleans where, in lieu of a speech, he addressed a public letter to the citizens of the city. In it he expressed his reaction to the election of Lincoln: "No man in America regrets the election of Mr. Lincoln more than I do: none made more strenuous exertions to defeat him: none differ with him more radically and irreconcileably upon all the great issues involved in the contest. No man living is [more] prepared to resist, by all the legitimate means, sanctioned by the Constitution and laws of our country, the aggressive policy which he and his party are understood to represent."4 Having made this declaration, however, Douglas went on to show why the mere election of any man by a majority of electoral votes, and according to constitutional provisions, was not sufficient cause for dissolving the Union. Douglas tried to quiet Southern fears by explaining how little power Lincoln and his administration would have, since both Congress and the Courts were dominated by those friendly to the South.

Many letters came to Douglas in the first weeks after the election. Johnson expressed his previously stated sentiment that the results were not a surprise but went on to compliment Douglas on his part in the contest. "I think you made a magnificent race and though defeated," Johnson declared, "you have nothing for which to reproach yourself. You have fallen

<sup>4</sup>Letters, 499-503.

in a noble struggle for principle."5

Like Douglas, Johnson then went about doing what he could to prevent the secession of Georgia from the Union. He considered his task hopeless, however, and gave his impression of the situation after a visit to Milledgeville, the capital of Georgia. The legislature was in session and was deciding the course which should be pursued by the state--whether to pass a secession ordinance at once, to wait for some signal of cooperation from the other Southern states, or to call a separate state convention to decide the question. Finally the third course was chosen. The mood of the political leaders of the state, however, did not presage a peaceful solution to the question of secession. Johnson recalled: "All the leaders of the Breckenridge democracy were there . . . rampant for immediate secession. They were impatient, overbearing, dictatorial and intolerant, could scarcely treat a Douglas man with courtesyif in addition to his being a Douglas man, he was for the Union, he was scorned."6

In a letter directed to some members of the legislature who had asked Johnson to give his views on the question of secession, the defeated vice-presidential candidate expressed ideas very similar to those of Douglas: "I do not think the election of Lincoln a sufficient cause for secession. No man

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Johnson to Douglas, November 25, 1860, Douglas MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Autobiography, 151

deprecates it more than I do. . . . But he is legitimately elected . . . and therefore, being stricklers [sic] ourselves, for conformity on the part of others to the Constitution, let us practice our precept by observing it on our part." Johnson pointed out, like Douglas, that if Lincoln followed the Constitution the South could have nothing to complain of, and that if he violated it in assaulting the rights of the South, then there would be greater unity for resisting such measures. 7

By December, Johnson despaired of preserving the Union. He wrote to a Northern friend: "The Rubicon is passed and I do not believe any power on earth can save the Union. Indeed the Union is dissolved already." Johnson pleaded: "Let secession be peaceable if possible," but then indicated his belief that this would not be the case.

These reactions expressed by Douglas and Johnson were typical of the extent to which preoccupation with the election turned almost immediately to controversy about the wisdom of immediate secession. The newspapers, except for giving the statistical returns on the election, were almost silent on the subject. Post mortems which analyzed the vote were superseded by editorials and letters discussing the issues of the preservation or dissolution of the Union. Beyond mathematical statistics then, any analysis of election returns for 1860 must

Johnson to George Hall, et al., November 16, 1860, unidentified newspaper clipping, Johnson MSS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Johnson to John Jeffries, December 28, 1860, unidentified newspaper clipping, <u>Ibid</u>.

be largely interpretive rather than based on wide evidence. A study of the vote in the Southern states reveals the areas where Douglas' strength existed and also just how weak his cause was in most places. A study of the nationwide popular and electoral votes reveals the great difference between these two measurements.

POPULAR AND ELECTORAL VOTES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860

Candidate	Popular Vote	Percentage	Electoral Vote	Percentage
Lincoln	1,857,610	39.91	180	59.40
Douglas	1,365,967	29.40	12	3.96
Breckenridge	847,953	18.08	72	23.76
Bell	590,631	12.61	39	12.54

An examination of the above table shows immediately that Douglas' share of the electoral vote was far from a true indication of the popular strength he enjoyed. More than any of the other candidates, his popularity was spread over a wide area without regard to sectional interests. This chapter will examine that support as it existed in the Southern states and attempt to analyze both why it existed and why it was not stronger.

One generalization which has been made concerning the election returns of 1860 is that urban areas tended to vote for the moderate candidates, Bell and Douglas, in greater numbers than rural areas did. This generalization proves to have been

especially true in the Northeast and in the South. The commercial classes of the cities were particularly alarmed at the thought of secession and war, which seemed too likely if either Lincoln or Breckenridge should win. One correspondent wrote from the South: "While the merchants in the cities desire peace and Union, the planters demand protection in the Union, or independence, under their own self-reliance out of it."9 Though the Charleston Mercury claimed that Southern ports would gain from independence, other Southern newspapers published in the bigger cities admitted that severance of the ties with the North, and especially war, would be detrimental to the trade of the South. Such concern was most acutely felt by such cities along the Mississippi as Memphis, Nashville, St. Louis and New Orleans. 10 Moreover there appeared to be bitter antagonism between the planters, most of whom supported Breckenridge, and the merchants. The New Orleans Delta asserted: "The two classes stand arrayed against each other in nearly all the political contests of the day. Three fourths of the planters are of one party, and an equal proportion of the merchants are the opposite."11

<sup>9</sup>New York Herald, September 27, 1860 as quoted in Ollinger Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting in the Election of 1860," in Historiography and Urbanization, ed. by Eric Goldman (Baltimore, 1941), 53. Hereafter cited as Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting."

<sup>10</sup> Memphis, Tennessee, <u>Daily Appeal</u>, October 5, 1860.

<sup>11</sup> New Orleans, Louisiana, <u>Daily Delta</u>, October 2, 1860 as quoted in Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting," 52.

and rural mentalities was suggested by the New York World shortly after the election. "In rural communities the moral element has more influence in politics than it has in towns, where the quick succession of events and ideas keeps the mind more alert, and does not allow that immobility of mental attitude which is favorable to a persistent contemplation of fixed principles. The slower perceptions of the agricultural mind do not enable it readily to keep up with the rapid pace of movements in revolutionary times." While these factors are not easily measured with any degree of accuracy they may help to suggest reasons for the trends which differentiated urban and rural voting in the South.

In Delaware, the northernmost slave state and one in which slavery was only of a nominal character, anti-secession sentiment was strong. Even William L. Yancey in a speech at Wilmington during the campaign found it necessary to moderate his sentiments. Evidence of the ties which Delaware had with the North is found in the fact that Lincoln received a respectable 23 percent of the vote there. This figure appears large when compared with the less than 3 percent he received in any other slave state except Missouri, where he received just over 10 percent. Douglas received only 6 percent of the vote of Delaware. 13

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in James Ford Rhodes, <u>History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850</u> (8 vols., New York, 1893-1919), III, 165-166, note 4.

<sup>13</sup>Crenshaw, Slave States, 122-126.

In Maryland the vote was divided almost evenly between Bell and Breckenridge with each receiving just over 45 percent. Contrary to the general rule, Breckenridge received a larger percentage in Baltimore, the state's only large city. Douglas received just over 6 percent of the vote as in Delaware, but Lincoln received only 2 1/2 percent. This final percentage, however, fails to reveal hidden sentiment in Maryland, since shortly after the election the Republican party became strong and respectable in the state. 14

In Virginia, Douglas received 16,290 votes or 9.7 percent of the total votes cast. He carried only four counties, two in the Shenandoah Valley and two west of the mountains. The fact that the remainder of the vote was almost evenly divided between the other two southern candidates, Bell and Breckenridge, shows that there was no clear cut majority for either the unionist candidate or the strong state rights candidate. Even in the western portion of the state which later opted to remain in the Union, the proportions which each received were the same as those received in the eastern part. 15 The one place where Douglas received a greater percentage of the votes was in the larger towns, even though not one of these was in a county where he received a plurality. In Petersburg. Douglas received 34 percent of the vote; in Wheeling, 22 percent; in Richmond, 17 percent; in Portsmouth, 15 percent; and

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 112-121.

<sup>15</sup>Henry Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia 1747-1861 (Richmond, 1934), 117.

in Norfolk, 14 percent. 16 This trend of the city-dwellers voting for Douglas (and Bell) in greater numbers than did the residents of the rural areas holds true for all of the major cities except Savannah, Georgia (and in Charleston, South Carolina where there was no popular election).

Throughout the campaign, letters from Virginia had assured Douglas of the increasing strength of his candidacy. In the light of the election returns it can be seen that the letter-writers greatly over-estimated those who favored Douglas over either Breckenridge or Bell. The results showed that he was far less popular than the other two candidates.

A careful study of the places in Virginia in which Douglas received a larger share of the vote than in the state as a whole reveals that it was in those areas that he enjoyed the support of local party leaders and a locally respected newspaper. In counties where these two supporting factors were lacking or minimal, even in those areas adjacent to counties in which Douglas did well, he received a much smaller share of the vote. 17

The vote in Georgia is difficult to analyze. Of the 167,223 votes cast, Douglas received just slightly less than 10 percent. This was a small percentage considering that Douglas' running mate, Herschel V. Johnson, was a native of Georgia and the former governor of the state. Also, Alexander

<sup>16</sup> Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting," 66.

<sup>17</sup> Shanks, The Secession Movement in Virginia, 118-119.

H. Stephens who was widely respected in Georgia campaigned for Douglas during the closing weeks of the contest. Also, Douglas had the support of the Augusta <u>Daily Constitutionalist</u> one of the most influential Southern newspapers.

Regarding this last factor, during the campaign an editorial in the Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, a Bell paper, stated that: "... the Constitutionalist has more influence perhaps than half dozen of the other Democratic presses put together, because it is, and always has been, conducted with marked ability, and its circulation equals any half dozen other papers of the same family in this state." This was perhaps a reason why the strength Douglas did have in Georgia was largely centered around Augusta. The only counties in which he received pluralities were in that immediate vicinity.

Paradoxically, the county where Stephens' home,
Crawfordsville, was located returned only nine votes for the
Douglas-Johnson ticket. Here the influence of a respected politicial friend did not seem to affect the voters.

Savannah was the one city in the South which did not have a respectable number of voters for Douglas and Bell, the moderate candidates. Rather Breckenridge received 67 percent of the vote while Douglas got only 12 percent. One historian has suggested that the people of Savannah expected to profit from secession by becoming an international port independent of the Northern ports. 19

<sup>18</sup> Undated newspaper clipping, Douglas MSS.

<sup>19</sup> Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting," 60.

In Alabama, Douglas received slightly more than 15 percent of the popular vote. Only Louisiana, of the deep South states, voted as strongly for Douglas. At first glance this seems like a large proportion considering that the state was the home of William Yancey, the fire-eating secessionist. An examination of the two areas where Douglas! strength was centered shows, however, that his popularity was concentrated rather than widespread. In keeping with the general trend, the city of Mobile gave Douglas 37.8 percent of its vote while rural Alabama gave him only 14 percent. His strength in Mobile was probably due partly to the same factors which influenced other urban centers to vote for the more moderate candidates. commercial classes were apt to oppose violent change, and in a port city they feared the effect of secession and war on their trade. It is significant that Mobile had been a Whig stronghold until the demise of that party, and many old-line Whigs supported Douglas' candidacy as did the Mobile Register ably edited by his friend John Forsyth. 20

The other area of Alabama which supported Douglas consisted of the northern counties which largely contained farmers who had little interest in the slave question and who even talked of seceding from Alabama if it seceded from the Union over the slavery issue. 21 Such sentiments were expressed in letters and speeches, but when the move to secession from the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Crenshaw, <u>Slave States</u>, 255-256.

Union was made, northern Alabama delegates went along with their fellow Alabamians and failed to carry out the threatened secession from southern Alabama.

Louisiana was the scene of both ardent support of and great opposition to Douglas. Here he received 15 percent of the popular vote, about the same as in Alabama. In the port city of New Orleans Douglas got 28 percent of the vote. Bell got 47.5 percent and their combined vote was larger than that for Breckenridge. The rural sections of the state gave Breckenridge so many votes, however, that he attained a small majority and got the electoral votes of the state. The three counties in which Douglas received a plurality were those along the Mississippi River in the southern part of the state, not far from New Orleans. 22

Those states of the South which were without larger towns also gave their electoral votes to Breckenridge. In North Carolina, Florida, and Mississippi, Douglas received less than 4 percent of the popular vote. In Arkansas the percentage was about 10. Here the issues of the national campaign seem to have been largely overshadowed by the intra-party struggles which divided the local Democrats. The Democratic machine of the state chose to support Breckenridge and the legitimacy of his candidacy seems to have influenced the vote of this rural

<sup>22</sup> Mary McLure, "The Elections of 1860 in Louisiana," The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, IX (October, 1926), 649.

state.23

The vote in Texas cannot be analyzed specifically in relation to Douglas because there the Bell and Douglas forces ran a fusion ticket. The vote of Texas, however, was overwhelmingly in favor of Breckenridge who received 75.5 percent of the vote. Since at that time Texas had no large cities it again showed the rural trend for Breckenridge and the strength of the principle of states' rights.

South Carolina was the only state in 1860 which still did not hold popular election of presidential electors. There the old system of having the legislature choose the electors was still in use. Therefore there are no election returns for South Carolina. It may be supposed, however, that since it was a stronghold of states' rights advocates and the leader in the subsequent secession movement that Douglas' popular vote would have been very small there.

Tennessee and Kentucky followed patterns similar to those in the deep South in their voting. The cities voted for Bell and Douglas by large margins and in the rural districts Breckenridge received the majority. In these two states, however, the electoral votes went to Bell rather than to Breckenridge. In Louisville, Covington, and Newport, Kentucky, Douglas received about 37 percent of the vote, while in rural Kentucky only 16 percent. His overall percentage for the state was 17 percent. In Memphis, Tennessee, he received 44 percent of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup>Jack Scroggs, "Arkansas in the Secession Crisis,"

The Arkansas Historical Quarterly, XII (Autumn, 1953), 179-190.

vote against 6.4 percent in the rural areas. In Nashville he received only 6.5 percent of the vote, but this can probably be explained by the fact that John Bell was a resident of that city and received 59 percent of the vote. It may be noted, however, that Breckenridge received 34 percent of the vote in Nashville while only receiving 11 percent in Memphis. The fact that Memphis was an important river port with close ties to the states along the northern half of the Mississippi, and therefore in danger of losing much by secession and war, may explain its strong support for the two moderate candidates. The counties of Tennessee where Douglas received a plurality were those near Memphis. Those in Kentucky where he did well were in the central part of the state just south of Cincinnati. 24

Missouri was the one state where Douglas received enough votes to give him the entire electoral vote. His support there was widely spread over the state with sixteen counties giving him a plurality. Lincoln ran quite well in Missouri, and this probably gave Douglas the margin he had over Bell. For the entire state Douglas received 35.5 percent of the vote. He got just slightly more than this in St. Louis and just slightly less in rural areas.<sup>25</sup>

In summary, Douglas received 11.8 percent of the votes in slave-holding states; 9.4 percent in the lower South--Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Florida;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup>Crenshaw, "Urban and Rural Voting," 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup>Ibid.

14.5 percent in the upper South--Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, Maryland and Delaware.<sup>26</sup>

Of far more importance than just the number of votes Douglas received are the reasons why he failed to receive the support of either the politicians or of the common people of the Democratic party though he was admittedly the strongest Democrat in the party in 1860.

The reasons for Douglas' defeat seem to fall into two categories. First, Douglas' personality and political record and the reactions which others had to him undoubtedly caused many to vote against him. Second was the whole complex of political events of the 1850's, of the election year itself, and of the changing political realities which underlay these events—factors which were beyond the control of any one person or party.

Douglas' personality was always present in his actions and decisions as a politician. Through the almost twenty years of his service in Congress Douglas had been in the forefront of most of the controversial questions of the day. In his optimistic, forthright manner he had always been frank about his views and unafraid to take a stand according to the principles he advocated. At times this forthrightness made him friends, but just as often it alienated those who differed with him. As the decade of the 1850's passed and the South became

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>Texas and South Carolina cannot be included because of the special circumstances of the election there which were mentioned above.

more aware of the growing power of the North, Douglas' solution to the slavery question became less and less acceptable.

And it was on this question of slavery that Douglas! personality and political principles met with the changing demands of both the North and South. While in 1850 a majority of Americans were willing to accept compromise solutions, with the passing of the decade the sections of the country grew farther apart until they could no longer agree on a common settlement for disputed questions. Old political alignments failed to fit the new demands of the growing, developing nation. This change was evident in the disintegration of old parties and the creation of new ones which proposed new answers to old questions. By the middle of the decade the old Whig party had disappeared except for the weak offshoots of the American and then Constitutional Union parties. The Democracy was also disintegrating, though less obviously so. In the North it was outdistanced by the Republican party which demanded the limitation of slavery in the territories and whose leader had talked of the eventual extinction of the institution. In the South the name Democracy continued to be used, but it was in reality a new Southern party composed of a majority faction united against what it considered the aggressions of the North.

Perhaps Douglas' greatest failure was his non-recognition of these new demands and political realities. While Douglas continued to strive for compromise solutions for the nation's problems, in the tradition of Henry Clay, the majority of Americans had become convinced by a new breed of political

leaders that compromise was not the answer, but rather that power and ultimatums were the best pathways to the continuation of the American dream.

Douglas was not the only one, however, who failed to measure the realities of the day accurately. Throughout the campaign majorities both North and South failed really to hear and take seriously what the opposing section was saying. In the South politicians convinced the people that the North was not serious in its talk of using force to preserve the Union. Most Southerners seem to have sincerely believed that secession could be accomplished peacefully. In the North too there was a failure to take seriously the Southern talk of secession and of an independent Southern nation.

The rhetoric of the 1860 campaign proved to be the prologue to disunion and four years of Civil War. With all his characteristic energy and enthusiasm, Douglas, aided by Johnson and their supporters, attempted to stem this tide of extremism both before and after the election. Whether or not Douglas' efforts were the wisest which could have been made may not be the central point in judging his efforts. That he was truly devoted to his country and its interests cannot be denied.

Nevertheless, to those of his time Douglas was found wanting. In the perspective granted by a century he seems to have been a truly national man, sincerely dedicated to the cause of peace and union. But this is hindsight and of less importance than the insights or impulses which directed a large majority of Americans to reject Douglas! leadership. At that time he

appeared too pro-Southern for most Northerners and too pro-Northern for most Southerners. Perhaps the truth lies in the middle, that he was in reality more concerned with doing the best for the nation as a whole rather than pandering to either section.

In the last public speech he made, on April 25, 1861, and after secession had changed from a threat to a reality, Douglas gave his own appraisal of his failure to accomplish the national unity which he had dreamed of. "Whatever errors I have committed have been in leaning too far to the southern section of the Union against my own." He had, he suggested, never 'pandered to the prejudice or passion' of his own section against the South. He would, on the contrary, defend and protect the rights of the Southern people 'to the full extent that a fair and liberal construction of the Constitution can give them.' But, he warned, he could never acquiesce in their 'attempt to destroy the government under which we were born.' 27

 $<sup>^{27}</sup>$ As quoted in Johannsen, "Douglas and the South," 27.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

## Manuscripts

Jeremiah Black. Library of Congress.

Breckenridge Family Papers. Library of Congress.

Joseph E. Brown. Department of Archives and History of the State of Georgia.

James Buchanan. Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Charleston Democratic Convention Papers, 1860. Duke University.

Clement C. Clay. Duke University Library.

Howell Cobb. University of Georgia.

Howell Cobb. Duke University.

Stephen A. Douglas. University of Chicago.

Henry C. Carey Gardiner. Pennsylvania Historical Society.

James Gardner. Department of Archives and History of the State of Georgia.

Robert M. T. Hunter. University of Virginia. Microfilm.

Robert M. T. Hunter. Virginia State Library.

J. P. Hambleton. Emory University.

James H. Hammond. Library of Congress. Microfilm.

Herschel V. Johnson. Duke University Library.

Lawrence M. Keitt. Duke University Library.

Logan Family Papers Scrapbook. Library of Congress.

Benjamin F. Perry. Alabama State Department of Archives and History.

Franklin Paerce. Library of Congress.

John Henly Smith. Department of Archives and History of the State of Georgia.

James Madison Spurlock. Department of Archives and History of the State of Georgia.

Alexander H. Stephens. Library of Congress.

Alexander H. Stephens. Convent Manuscripts. Microfilm.

Alexander H. Stephens. Emory University.

Jesse Turner, Sr. Scrapbook. Duke University.

Benjamin L. C. Wailes Diary. Duke University.

William L. Yancey. Alabama State Department of Archives and History.

## Newspapers

Advertiser, Edgefield, South Carolina.

Alabama State Sentinel, Selma, Alabama.

American and Commercial Advertiser, Baltimore, Maryland.

Daily Appeal, Memphis, Tennessee.

Arkansian, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Bee, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Chronicle and Sentinel, Augusta, Georgia.

Confederation, Montgomery, Alabama.

Courier, Rome, Georgia.

Daily Constitutionalist, Augusta, Georgia.

Morning News, Savannah, Georgia.

Daily Sun, Columbus, Georgia

Des Arc Citizen, Des Arc, Arkansas.

Enquirer, Richmond, Virginia.

Evening Star, Washington, D. C.

Herald, Dallas, Texas.

Herald, New York, New York.

Mercury, Charleston, South Carolina.

National Intelligencer, Washington, D. C.

New York Times, New York, New York.

Patriot, Albany, Georgia.

Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio.

Register, Mobile, Alabama.

Signal, Auburn, Alabama.

Southern Banner, Athens, Georgia.

Southern Shield, Helena, Arkansas.

Times, Columbus, Georgia.

True Delta, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Union and American, Nashville, Tennessee.

Weekly Mail, Montgomery, Alabama.

Weekly Standard, Raleigh, North Carolina.

North Carolina Whig, Charlotte, North Carolina.

# Government Documents

Congressional Globe. 28th Cong., 2d sess., 1848; 30th Cong., 1st sess. App., 1848; 31st Cong., 1st sess., 1850; 33rd Cong., 1st sess. App., 1854; 35th Cong., 1st sess., 1857; 35th Cong., 2d sess., 1859; 36th Cong., 1st sess., 1860.

- Journal of the Georgia State Senate, 1847, 1851, 1853.
- Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia. 1849-1850.

# Books. Periodicals and Pamphlets

- Arnold, Richard D. <u>Letters of Richard D. Arnold</u>. <u>Maited by Richard Shryock in Trinity College Historical Society Papers</u>. <u>Vol. XVIII-XIX</u>. <u>Durham</u>, 1929.
- Belmont, August.

  Belmont.

  New York, 1870.
- Brown, Albert G. The Speeches. Messages and Other Writings of the Honorable Albert G. Brown. Senator from the State of Mississippi. Edited by M. W. Cluskey. New York, 1859.
- Buchanan, James. The Works of James Buchanan. Edited by John Bassett Moore. Vol. IX-XII. Philadelphia, 1910.
- Calhoun, John C. <u>Correspondence of John C. Calhoun</u>. Edited by J. Franklin Jameson. Vol. II. Washington, D. C., 1899.
- Clarke, Richard H. Memoirs of Judge Richard H. Clarke. Atlanta, 1898.
- Clingman, Thomas L. Selections from the Speeches and Writings of Thomas L. Clingman of North Carolina. Raleigh, 1877.
- Curtis, G. W. "Political Career of Stephen A. Douglas," North American Review, CIII (October, 1866), 509-519.
- Davis, Jefferson. <u>Jefferson Davis Constitutionalist: His Letters. Papers. and Speeches</u>. Edited by Rowland Dunbar. Vol. I, III, IV. Jackson, Mississippi.
- York, 1881. New
- Douglas, Stephen A. A Brief Treatise upon Constitutional and Party Questions, and the History of Political Parties. Edited by J. Madison Cutts. New York, 1866.
- . Preseedings at the Banquet of the Jackson Democratic Association. Washington, D. C., 1852.

- Douglas, Stephen A. The Montgomery Address of Stephen A.

  Douglas. Edited by David Barbee and Milledge Bonham,

  Jr., in Journal of Southern History, V (November, 1939),

  527-552.
- Johannsen. Urbana, 1961.
- . "Popular Sovereignty in the Territories-The Dividing Line Between Federal and Local Authority." Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XIX (September, 1859), 519-537.
- . Speech of Stephen A. Douglas at Springfield,
  Illinois, June 12, 1857. Pamphlet in Duke University
  Library, Rare Book Room, n.p., n.d.
- Dumond, Dwight, ed. Southern Editorials on Secession. New York, 1931.
- Forsyth, John. "Letters of John Forsyth to William F. Sanford in Defence of Stephen A. Douglas." Washington, D.C., 1859.
- Foote, Henry S. War of the Rebellion. New York, 1866.
- Halstead, Murat. Three Against Lincoln: Murat Halstead
  Reports the Caucuses of 1860. Edited by William B.
  Hesseltine. Baton Rouge, 1960.
- . Trimmers. Trucklers and Temporizers: Notes of Murat Halstead from the Political Convention of 1856. Edited by William B. Hesseltine. Madison, Wisconsin, 1961.
- Holden, William W. Memoirs of W. W. Holden. Durham, 1911.
- Howard, J. "Reminiscenses of Stephen A. Douglas." Atlantic Monthly, VIII (August, 1861), 205-213.
- Hunter, Robert M. T. Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter.

  Edited by Charles H. Ambler. Washington, D. C., 1918.
  In American Historical Association Annual Report, 1916.
- Jaffa, Henry and Robert W. Johannsen, eds. <u>In the Name of the People: Speeches and Writings of Lincoln and Douglas in the Ohio Campaign of 1859</u>. Columbus, Ohio, 1959.
- Lincoln, Abraham. The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln.

  Edited by Roy P. Basler. Vol. III-IV. New Brunswick,

  N.J., 1953.
- Official Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention Held in 1860 at Charleston and Baltimore. Cleveland, Ohio, 1860.

- Official Proceedings of the National Democratic Convention. Held at Cincinnati. June 2-6, 1856. Cincinnati, 1856.
- Phillips, Ulrich B., ed. The Correspondence of Robert Toombs,
  Alexander H. Stephens. and Howell Cobb. Washington,
  D. C., 1913. In American Historical Association Annual
  Report, 1911.
- Proceedings of the Conventions at Charleston and Baltimore.
  Washington, 1860.
- Roberts, Percy. "Mr. Douglas! Article on Popular Sovereignty."

  <u>DeBow's Review</u>, XXVII (December, 1859), 625-647.
- Sanders, George. "Congress, The Presidency and the Review."

  <u>Democratic Review</u>, XXX (March, 1852), 202-224.
- Sheahan, James W. The Life of Stephen A. Douglas. New York, 1860.
- Taylor, Richard. <u>Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal</u>
  <u>Experiences of the Late War</u>. New York, 1879.
- Tribune Almanac and Political Register. New York, 1861.
- The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Series II, Voh. II. Washington, 1897.

### Secondary Sources

### Books

- Auer, J. Jeffery, ed. Anti-Slavery and Disunion: Studies in the Rhetoric of Compromise and Conflict. New York, 1963.
- Boney, F. N. John Letcher of Virginia: The Story of Virginia's Civil War Governor. University of Alabama, 1966.
- Capers, Gerald M. Stephen A. Douglas: Defender of the Union. Boston, 1959.
- Channing, Stephen. <u>Crisis of Fear: South Carolina in the Secession Crisis</u>. New York, 1970.
- Coleman, Mrs. Chapman, ed. The Life of John J. Crittenden with Selections from His Correspondence and Speeches. Philadelphia, 1871.

- Craven, Avery. The Coming of the Civil War. 2d ed. New York, 1957.
- The Growth of Southern Nationalism. 1848-1861. Vol. VI of A History of the South. Baton Rouge, 1953.
- Crenshaw, Ollinger. "Urban and Rural Voting in the Election of 1860." <u>Historiography and Urbanization</u>. Edited by Eric Goldman. Baltimore, 1941.
- The Slave States in the Presidential Election of 1860. Baltimore, 1945.
- Curtis, George Ticknor. The Life of James Buchanan. New York, 1883.
- Denman, Clarence. The Secession Movement in Alabama. Montgomery, 1933.
- Dumond, Dwight. Secession Movement. 1860-61. New York, 1931.
- Fite, Emerson. The Presidential Campaign of 1860. New York, 1911.
- Flippin, Percy Scott. <u>Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia: State</u>
  <u>Rights Unionist</u>. Richmond, Va., 1931.
- Foner, Eric. Free Soil. Free Labor. Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War. New York, 1970.
- Gates, Paul. Fifty Million Acres: Conflicts Over Kansas Land Policy. 1854-1890. Ithaca, N. Y., 1954.
- Graebner, Norman, ed. Politics and the Crisis of 1860. Urbana, Ill., 1961.
- Johannsen, Robert. Stephen A. Douglas. New York, 1973.
- Katz, Irving. August Belmont. A Political Biography. New York, 1968.
- Kibler, Lillian. Benjamin F. Perry. South Carolina Unionist.
  Durham, 1946.
- Klein, Phillip. <u>President James Buchanan</u>. University Park, Pa., 1962.
- Knight, Lucian Lamar. Reminiscences of Famous Georgians. Atlanta, 1808.
- Knoles, George. The Crisis of the Union. 1860-1861. Binghamton, N. Y., 1965.

- Milton, George Fort. The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War. New York, 1934.
- Montgomery, Horace. Cracker Parties. Baton Rouge, 1950.
- Morrison, Chaplain. <u>Democratic Politics and Sectionalism: The Wilmot Previso Controversy</u>. Chapel Hill, 1967.
- Nevins, Allan. The Emergence of Lincoln. 2 vols. New York, 1950.
- . The Ordeal of the Union 2 vols. New York, 1947.
- Nichols, Roy F. The Democratic Machine. 1950-1854. New York, 1923.
- . The Disruption of American Democracy. New York, 1948.
- Norton, Clarence C. The Democratic Party in Ante-Bellum North Carolina, 1845-1861. Chapel Hill, 1930.
- Parks, Joseph H. John Bell of Tennessee. Baton Rouge, 1950.
- Phillips, Ulrich B. Georgia and State Rights. Washington, D. C., 1902.
- Potter, David. Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis. New Haven, 1942.
- Rainwater, Percy Lee. <u>Mississippi Storm Center of Secession</u>, 1856-1861. Baton Rouge, 1938.
- Randall, J., and David Donald. The Civil War and Reconstruction. Rev. ed. Boston, 1966.
- Reynolds, Donald. Editors Make War: Southern Newspapers in the Secession Crisis. Nashville, 1970.
- Sears, Louis. John Slidell. Durham, 1925.
- Shanks, Henry. The Secession Movement in Virginia. Richmond, Va., 1934.
- Shryock, Richard. Georgia and the Union in 1850. Philadelphia, 1926.
- Sitterson, Joseph. The Secession Movement in North Carolina. Chapel Hill, 1939.
- Thompson, William. Robert Toombs of Georgia. Baton Rouge, 1966.
- Von Abele, Rudolph. Alexander H. Stephens. New York, 1946.
- Wells, Damon. Stephen A. Douglas: The Last Years. Austin, Texas, 1971.

- White, Laura. Robert Barnwell Rhett: Father of Secession. New York, 1931.
- Wilson, Henry. History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America. Vol. 2 of 3 vols. Boston, 1872-1877.

## Periodicals

- Bonham, Milledge, Jr. "New York and the Election of 1860."

  New York History, XV (April, 1934), 124-143.
- Bryan, T. Conn. "The Secession of Georgia." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXXI (June, 1947), 89-111.
- Collins, William B. "Herschel V. Johnson in the Georgia Secession Convention." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XI (December, 1927), 330-333.
- Craven, Avery. "Georgia and the South." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXIII (September, 1939), 219-236.
- Curti, Merle. "George N. Sanders-American Patriot of the Fifties." South Atlantic Quarterly, XXVII (January, 1928), 79-87.
- Doherty, Herbert. "Union Nationalism in Georgia." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (March, 1953), 18-38.
- Greene, Helene. "Politics in Georgia, 1853-54: The Ordeal of Howell Cobb." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXX (September, 1946), 185-211.
- Hodder, Frank H. "Stephen A. Douglas." Edited by James C. Malin. Kansas Historical Quarterly, VIII (August, 1939), 227-237.
- Johannsen, Robert. "Stephen A. Douglas, 'Harpers Magazine' and Popular Sovereignty." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLV (March, 1959), 606-631.
- . "Stephen A. Douglas' New England Campaign, 1860."

  New England Quarterly, XXXV (June, 1962), 162-186.
- . "Stephen A. Douglas, Popular Sovereignty and the Territories." <u>Historian</u>, XXII (August, 1960), 378-395.
- . "Stephen A. Douglas and the South." Journal of Southern History, XXXIII (February, 1967), 1-35.

- Long, Durward. "Economics and Politics in the 1860 Presidential Election in Alabama." Alabama Historical Quarterly, XXVII (Spring-Summer, 1965), 43-58.
- McLure, Mary. "The Elections of 1860 in Louisiana." The Louisiana Historical Quarterly, IX (October, 1926), 601-702.
- McConnell, George. "Recollections of Stephen A. Douglas."

  Illineis State Historical Society Transactions.

  Springfield, Ill., 1900.
- Meerse, David. "Buchanan and Corruption and the Election of Civil War History, XII (June, 1966), 116-131.
- Murphy, James. "Alabama and the Charleston Convention of 1860."

  Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society. Vol. V

  (Montgomery, Ala., 1904), 239-266.
- Nichols, Roy F. "The Kansas-Nebraska Act: A Century of Historiography." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIII (September, 1956), 187-212.
- Porter, David. "The Southern Press and the Presidential Election of 1860." West Virginia History, XXXIII (October, 1971), 1-13.
- Roberts, S. H. "Benjamin Fitzpatrick and the Vice-Presidency."

  Transactions of the Alabama Historical Society. Vol. V

  (Montgomery, Ala., 1899-1903), 357-364.
- Russel, Robert R. "What Was the Compromise of 1850?" Journal of Southern History, XXII (August, 1956), 292-309.
- Scroggs, Jack. "Arkansas in the Secession Crisis." <u>Arkansas</u>
  <u>Historical Quarterly</u>, XII (Autumn, 1953), 179-192.
- Simpson, John E. "Howell Cobb's Bid for the Presidency in 1860." Georgia Historical Quarterly, LV (Spring, 1971), 102-113.
- Tarver, Jerry. "The Political Clubs of New Orleans in the Presidential Election of 1860." <u>Louisiana History</u>, IV (Spring, 1963), 119-129.
- Thomas, David. "Southern Non-Slaveholders in the Election of 1860." Political Science Quarterly, XXVI (June, 1911), 222-237.
- Venable, Austin. "The Conflict Between the Douglas and Yancey Forces." Journal of Southern History, VIII (May, 1942), 226-241.

- Weisberger, Bernard. "The Newspaper Reporter and the Kansas Imbroglio." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXVI (March, 1950), 633-656.
- Wooster, Ralph. "The Georgia Secession Convention." Georgia Historical Quarterly, XL (March, 1956), 21-55.
- Yulee, C. Wickliffe. "Senator Yulee." The Florida Historical Quarterly, II (April, 1909), 26-43.

#### BIOGRAPHY

The author, Elizabeth Dix Greeman, was born in Chicago, Illinois, July 29, 1933. She received the B.A. degree, <u>cum</u> laude, from Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For several years she taught in elementary and secondary schools in the Midwest. She received her M.A. degree from Duke University in June, 1969. While a graduate student at Duke University she was an instructor in American History there, 1972-1973 and at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, 1973-1974.

Greeman is married to William Louis Greeman, USNR, chief supervisor of the Frank G. Hall Laboratory, Duke University Medical Center.